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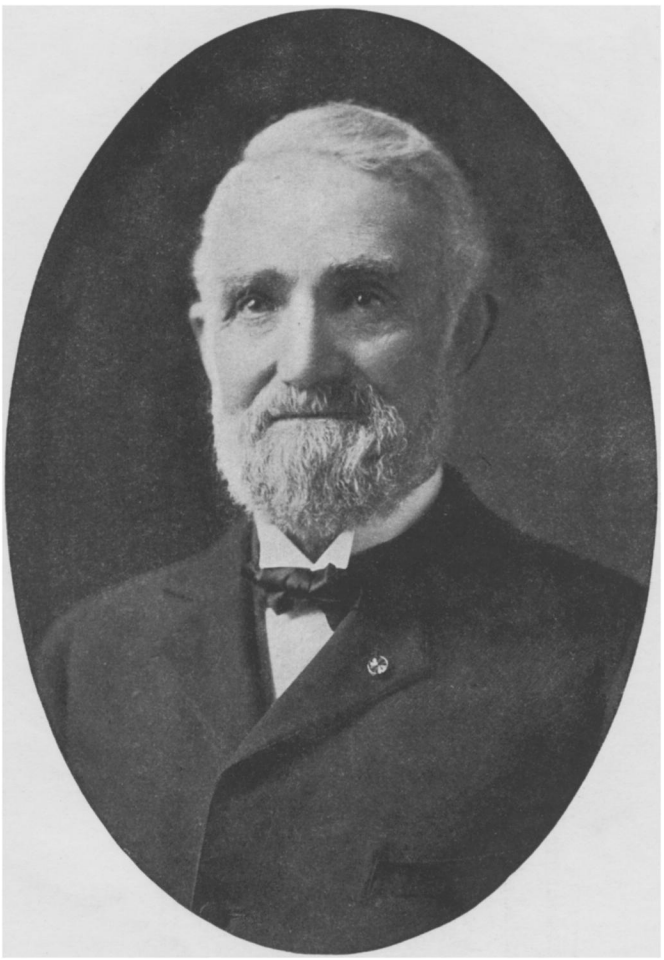

Theodore E. Potter

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CAPTAIN POTTER'S RECOLLECTIONS OF MINNESOTA EXPERIENCES[1]

In 1852, when twenty years of age, with others I went by the overland route, with ox teams, to California to dig gold. While there, in connection with many other stirring incidents in the mines, I joined a militia company to fight the Indians

[1] The document here printed was written by Captain Potter in 1907, in response to a request from the secretary of the Minnesota Historical Society. While not always accurate in details, as is true of most narratives based largely on memory, it throws new light on some phases of the history of the state. Aside from the correction of a few obvious slips, no attempt has been made to revise the manuscript, but attention has been called in some instances to parallel accounts which would be useful in checking up the narrative. The notes have been prepared by Miss Franc M. Potter of the staff of the Minnesota Historical Society, with some assistance from Miss Dorothy Heinemann and Miss Marjorie Carr of the University of Minnesota.—*Ed.*

Very little has been learned of the life of Captain Theodore E. Potter in addition to what may be gained from the present narrative. His father, Linus Potter, a Pennsylvanian by birth, came to Michigan from Cayuga County, New York, in 1830, and settled in Saline, Washtenaw County. Here on March 10, 1832, his son Theodore E. was born. Financial reverses forced the father in 1844 to join a second time the ranks of pioneers, and with his family, consisting of his wife and seven children, he began life again on a 120-acre tract of timber land in Eaton County, Michigan, which afterwards became the site of the present town of Potterville. He died in 1846. Six years later, his son Theodore, a young man of twenty, joined a company bound for California, where he remained for several years; he was a member of General William Walker's filibustering expedition to Nicaragua and, on its unsuccessful termination, returned to his home in Michigan. A trip through the Minnesota and Blue Earth valleys in the early part of 1856 influenced him to make Minnesota his permanent home. Returning to the state in the following spring, he settled in Garden City, and at once took a leading position in the affairs of the village. On the organization of the town of Watonwan, May 11, 1858, he was elected collector; and in the town election of the following spring he was named chairman of supervisors, becoming *ex officio* a member of the board of county supervisors. Mr. Potter

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that became very troublesome in Mariposa and Merced counties. This was the first chapter in my military experience.[1]

The second and briefer chapter followed not long after. With many others I was persuaded, under expectation of great gain, to join General Walker's Nicaraguan filibustering expedition, which soon ended in our breaking up and hurrying out of that country to escape capture. Then, upon my retreat in February, 1856, I returned to my home in Michigan, accompanied by three young men from Wisconsin who had shared many of these incidents with me.

But in the spring of 1856 we decided to go back to California by way of New Orleans and Panama. We went to New York, Washington, Baltimore, Richmond, Charleston, Jacksonville, Mobile, and New Orleans, where we learned that the steamer for Panama had given up going to Panama on account of the prevalence of cholera and yellow fever at that place. We then decided to go back north, and took a Mississippi River boat for St. Paul, Minnesota, at the head of navigation, two thousand miles away by river, reaching there in fourteen days.

We were glad to get back on northern soil, as the slavery

played a not unimportant rôle in the Indian and Civil wars. He was a member of several volunteer companies of citizens organized for defence against the Indians, and was enrolled as first lieutenant of Company B, First Regiment Mounted Rangers, which took part in General Sibley's expedition of 1863. The following year he received a commission as captain and recruited a company for service in the Civil War, which was mustered in as Company C, Eleventh Regiment Infantry Minnesota Volunteers. On his return from the South in 1865 Captain Potter purchased a farm near Garden City, on which he lived until 1876, when he returned to Michigan. Thereafter for many years he was associated with two of his brothers in the hardwood lumber business in Potterville. About the year 1891, having secured an interest in the Potter Furniture Manufacturing Company of Lansing, he removed to that city, residing there until his death, which occurred in 1912. Samuel W. Durant, *History of Ingham and Eaton Counties, Michigan,* 421, 422 (Philadelphia, 1880); Thomas Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County, Minnesota,* 100, 248 (Chicago, 1909).

[1] In a letter accompanying this manuscript Captain Potter says that in 1854 he joined a company of the California state militia called the Sonora Grays and had ten days' actual service against the Indians.

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question down south was then boiling hot, and every northern man was watched as an abolitionist with extreme jealousy and suspicion, and during our three weeks' stay in southern territory we witnessed many stirring examples of this suspicion and hatred, and learned best to keep quiet on that subject down there.

At St. Paul, then with a population of about three thousand,[1] we went to the fine Merchants' Hotel; visited St. Anthony's Falls; examined the work going on to harness that great water power for service;[2] visited the present Minneapolis, only a small city,[3] and returned to St. Paul by way of Fort Snelling.

The next day my three friends from Wisconsin concluded to go back down the river and make their way to California by some route during the summer. We parted at the wharf, bidding each other good-bye for the last time, and I have never heard a word from them since.

The same day I took a boat for Mankato, which was loaded down with passengers looking for desirable locations to settle on the lands recently purchased by the government from the Sioux Indians. I spent a week looking over the Blue Earth

[1] According to the census of Minnesota Territory, taken in 1855, the population of St. Paul was 4,716. *Weekly Minnesotian,* August 11, 1855. The census of 1857 increased this figure to 9,973. J. Fletcher Williams, *A History of the City of St. Paul and of the County of Ramsey, Minnesota,* 381 *(Minnesota Historical Collections,* vol. 4).

[2] For an account of the dam under construction during the summer of 1856 by the St. Anthony Falls Water Power Company and the Minneapolis Mill Company, see Isaac Atwater, *History of the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota,* 1: 33, 529, 534 (New York, 1893); W. H. Mitchell and J. H. Stevens, *Geographical and Statistical History of the County of Hennepin,* 116, 129 (Minneapolis, 1868); the beginning of the work is noted in the *St. Anthony Express,* July 5, 1856.

[3] The territorial census taken in the fall of 1857 gave Minneapolis a population of 4,123. *Weekly Minnesotian,* November 14, 1857. Compare, however, Atwater's statement that at the beginning of 1857 there were by actual count 198 buildings in Minneapolis, and "as many of these were stores and shops, it is evident . . . that there was shelter for less than 1,000," though he adds that 248 new buildings were erected during the year and that the population was rapidly growing. *History of the City of Minneapolis,* 1: 40.

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and Minnesota river valleys south and west of Mankato; then took a boat at the German town of New Ulm and returned to Michigan, my native state, where my mother, brothers, and sisters all lived.

Early in the spring of 1857 I concluded to go to Minnesota and make a permanent home for myself there. As soon as I could get ready, I started for St. Paul by way of Galena, Dubuque, La Crosse, and Winona, and got the first boat that broke the ice through to St. Paul that spring,[1] and then took passage on another boat, the "Time and Tide" which "waits for no man," for the Sioux agency, five hundred miles by boat up the Minnesota River[2] beyond the historic Indian town of Mendota[3] on the left hand, and Fort Snelling on the right on

[1] Compare with Atwater's account of his journey from Central New York to Minneapolis this same spring, May 7–18, in his *History of the City of Minneapolis,* 1: 39.

[2] Interesting accounts of steamboating on the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers are: Russell Blakeley, "History of the Discovery of the Mississippi River and the Advent of Commerce in Minnesota" in *M. H. C.* 8: 376–418, and Thomas Hughes, "History of Steamboating on the Minnesota River" in *M. H. C.* 10: 131–163 (part 1). Mr. Hughes relates how the captain of the "Time and Tide," Louis Robert, was wont to call out, as the boat was about to leave its dock, "All aboard! 'Time and Tide' waits for no man" (p. 143).

[3] Mendota is not, historically speaking, an Indian village. Neither Pike, Long, Forsyth, nor Keating in the narratives of their exploratory expeditions on the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers makes any mention of an Indian village at this point; nor does Edward D. Neill in his enumeration of the villages of the bands of the Mdewakanton Sioux in 1853, in *M. H. C.* 1: 263, nor Samuel W. Pond in his "The Dakotas or Sioux in Minnesota as They Were in 1834" in *M. H. C.* 12: 320–330. The site was, however, selected by the early fur-traders as being a particularly suitable location for a trading post. Henry H. Sibley in his "Reminiscences: Historical and Personal" in *M. H. C.* 1: 468, gives an account of Jean Baptiste Faribault's post at that place; and about the year 1824 Alexis Bailly was established there as agent of the American Fur Company, being superseded in 1834 by Sibley. *M. H. C.* 3: 319 n. 1; *Wisconsin Historical Collections,* 20: 197 n. 55. Sibley, in describing his arrival in Minnesota, says of Mendota, "There were a few log houses at St. Peters, occupied by persons employed in the fur trade." "Reminiscences of the Early Days of Minnesota" in *M. H. C.* 3: 245.

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a high rocky bluff near the junction of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers, for many years the headquarters of the United States forces in the Northwest.

Twenty-five miles above Fort Snelling the boat made its first landing at the stirring young town of Shakopee, named in honor of a celebrated Sioux chief, and five miles up the river was Shaska, an Indian village;[1] and then next Belle Plaine, a county seat of some importance,[2] where many left the boat looking for land, and many more came on board to go farther up the river to find better locations, as it was said that every piece of good land for two hundred miles above St. Paul on the river had been located and laid out into a village plot or townsite, and a hotel or store of some kind erected to start the place, with a saloon and blacksmith shop added where it was possible. All these enterprises had started within the few years since the land had been purchased from the Sioux Indians. The river formed the line between counties, and land speculators had located "county seats" on the river, accessible to land-seekers, to benefit them in the sale of lands on the reputation of the county-seat locations. Many of these county seats were afterwards changed by the people. We passed many new little towns made lively by the constant coming of new settlers from the eastern states and foreign countries.

At Le Sueur, one hundred miles above St. Paul, two hundred passengers left the boat and about one hundred came on board,

[1] Shaska was the original spelling of Chaska, at this time a small hamlet containing some ten voters. There is no record of its being the site of an Indian village (see page 422, note 3). It was selected as a favorable location for a trading post in August, 1851, by Thomas A. Holmes, who afterwards disposed of his rights to the Fuller Brothers of St. Paul, proprietors of the townsite in 1857. R. I. Holcombe and William H. Bingham, *Compendium of History and Biography of Carver and Hennepin Counties, Minnesota,* 210, 211 (Chicago, 1915).

[2] Shakopee, and not Belle Plaine, was the county seat of Scott County in 1857, having been so designated by action of the board of county commissioners February 6, 1854. *History of the Minnesota Valley,* 290 (Minneapolis, North Star Publishing Company, 1882).

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giving us, with the heavy load of freight for the Indian agencies farther up, a very heavy load for the river navigation so high up, rendering it at times very difficult for the stern-wheeler to make much progress in the swift current. So when we came in sight of Traverse des Sioux, Colonel Flandrau, the Indian agent on board, told some of us that, as it was ten miles by the river to St. Peter and only one mile on foot by a good road, he usually walked across, and if the others would do so, it would lighten the boat and give them a pleasant walk. Nearly all of us walked. On the arrival of the boat a large crowd was present, and the captain announced that no additional passengers could be taken and that the boat would not leave until four o'clock the next morning.

Morton S. Wilkinson, a young lawyer I had known at home, and who was now a member of the Minnesota territorial legislature and also a member of the constitutional convention soon to be held at St. Paul, was a passenger on our boat on his way to the Indian agencies with Agent Flandrau, and invited me to go to a hotel and stay overnight with him. Colonel Flandrau was a young western man and had been with the Sioux Indians for several years. He was dressed in a buck-skin suit, with his long, straight, light-colored hair hanging down to his shoulders, and he had a kind and pleasant word for everyone, making him a favorite for all on board the boat. While we were at the hotel, he became interested in my California history and desired to hear all he could of it. Wilkinson went to Minnesota the same year I went to California, and told Flandrau the reason he did not go to California with me was because he could not raise money enough to buy an ox team to go with. Before and during our Civil War Wilkinson was United States senator from Minnesota and [was] considered one of the ablest and most loyal men in the Senate.[1]

[1] Captain Potter's account of Senator Wilkinson is not entirely free from errors. Mr. Wilkinson came to Stillwater, Minnesota, in 1847 from Eaton Rapids, Eaton County, Michigan, where he had been

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After a good night's rest in a hotel bed we were early on the boat and on our way up the river again with one hundred less passengers than the day before. Our next stop was Mankato, thirty miles by river and ten by land and six hours making it, on the way meeting the steamer "Favorite" for St. Paul with several hundred passengers on board.[1] Mankato was then the largest town on the river. Our stop was only long enough to let off some passengers, but [we] took none on. New Ulm, a Cincinnati German town, seventy-five miles by river, was the next stop, where over one hundred Germans left the boat. We took on about fifty who were going to visit the Indian agencies. Three miles above New Ulm we came to the lands still owned by the Sioux Indians lying on both sides of the river and extending north and west to Big Stone Lake at the head of the river and Dakota line. Soon after dark we reached Fort Ridgely, where a large quantity of government supplies were unloaded. We did not leave until daylight, and at noon were at the Lower [or] Redwood Agency, located on a beautiful prairie skirted with timber and about two hundred

engaged in the practice of law since 1843. From 1850 to 1856 he resided in St. Paul, removing from that city in 1857 to Mankato. Wilkinson was elected to the first territorial legislature of 1849 from Washington County, and was state senator from Blue Earth County from 1874 to 1877; but he was not in the legislature of 1857, nor was he a member of either constitutional convention, though he was one of the commission appointed in 1851 to compile a revised code of laws for the territory. He served as United States senator from Minnesota, 1859–65, and represented the first district in the lower house, 1869–71. *Biographical Congressional Directory,* 1111 (Washington, 1913); *St. Paul Pioneer Press,* February 5, 1894; *St. Paul Globe,* February 5, 1894; Minnesota, *Revised Statutes,* 1851, p. vii; Minnesota, *Legislative Manual,* 1915, pp. 90, 91, 104, 116–118; Minnesota Constitutional Convention (Democratic), *Debates and Proceedings,* 676 (St. Paul, Goodrich, pr., 1857); Minnesota Constitutional Convention (Republican), *Debates and Proceedings,* 6, 619 (St. Paul, Moore, pr., 1858).

[1] This steamboat is not listed in the "Annual Review of Steamboat Statistics" published in the *Weekly Minnesotian,* November 28, 1857. According to Hughes the "Favorite" was entered as a new boat in the spring of 1859. "History of Steamboating on the Minnesota River" in *M. H. C.* 10: 146 (part 1).

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feet above the river. Colonel Flandrau and Mr. Wilkinson invited all the passengers to visit the agency eighty rods from the river, and take a look at the inside as well as the outside arrangements of a United States government Indian agency during the unloading of its government supplies, taking the remainder of the day. Several thousand Indians were gathered there from different parts of their own lands waiting for the distribution of the government supplies brought for them. Many of the Indians were at the landing-place to cordially greet and welcome their agent, Colonel Flandrau, who invited Wilkinson and myself to a good supper and lodging at the agency that night.

The next day Wilkinson and myself took the boat for Yellow Medicine or Upper Indian Agency, one hundred miles by water, while Flandrau took his team of Indian ponies and drove forty miles across the country in time to meet us at the Upper Agency, which it took us two days to reach. The Upper Agency was two miles from our landing-place, and as it was late in the day and the boat was to lay there two nights before starting on the return trip, the passengers remained on board until the next morning, except Wilkinson, myself, and a few others, who walked up the narrow pleasant valley of Yellow Medicine River to the agency, located in a fine oak grove one hundred feet or more above the valley.

The agency buildings were of brick, handmade by the Indians. Here we were again met by Colonel Flandrau and also Major Galbraith, another agent, who was sent with two other men not yet arrived to investigate the conditions and needs of the Indians who had sold their lands to the government for a small sum and were to receive their pay in goods at high rates. While here I found a man from Michigan, with his family, who had the contract for erecting the buildings of the agency, and stayed with them for two days.

With three other men I then took passage on board an Indian pony to go across the country back to the Lower Agency, accompanied by an Indian guide who was to take back our four

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ponies. We were all day riding the forty miles over a beautiful prairie country dotted with growths of fine timber bordering all the streams and lakes, and passing a number of small brick houses built by the government for Indian families who chose to adopt more civilized modes of life and follow the business of farming, to whom were allotted eighty acres of land, a brick house sixteen by twenty-four feet, one and one-half stories high, agricultural implements, and a white man as instructor and overseer to assist them in learning their new mode of subsistence. So, on this ride from one agency to another, we would frequently see Indians, dressed like white men, at work in the fields, plowing with a yoke of oxen driven by a squaw or young Indian; others at making bricks; and we passed two well-built churches, all the result of a few years' change in the lives of these once wild savages.

Reaching Redwood Agency, I obtained lodgings with one of the boss Indian farmers, living in good style in a nice new brick house. The next day was semiannual payment Indian day, the payments to be made partly in gold and the balance in provisions, blankets, and other goods needed for their comfort and subsistence. A company of troops had been sent out from Fort Ridgely to keep order if necessary during the payment, as Sioux with their families from as far north as the Canadian border and for two hundred miles west came to receive their government pay at these two agencies. Children [and those] aged and feeble and unable to walk came on conveyances made of two long poles fastened at one end to each side of a pony, the other dragging on the ground and covered with skins, several hundreds of which, drawn for hundreds of miles, were in sight the first day. The system of payment was by number, each family having a registered number by which they were known, and when that number was called, the head of the family carrying it presented it himself for his allowance for the next six months, less the amount he had traded out in advance with the traders licensed by the government to sell to the Indians. Often at pay day the Indian found but very little

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coming to him, leaving him very poor for the next six months, while the trader found himself rich from the great profits made on his goods, the Indians having no real estimate of the value of money or worth of the goods he wanted to buy. Such ignorance on his part and extravagant prices on the part of the trader have often caused a great deal of dissatisfaction and trouble, and probably violence and war. This Indian pay day was the only one I ever saw, and was very interesting as a lesson in future intercourse and knowledge of Indian habits and life.

The following day four of us hired a man and double team to take us twelve miles across to Fort Ridgely on the opposite side of the river, which we crossed by ferry near the agency, and were soon riding over a beautiful unpopulated prairie on the north side of the river, reaching Fort Ridgely at ten o'clock in the forenoon, where we found five companies of United States troops and two batteries of light artillery. We stayed four hours, visiting the fort and taking dinner with the soldiers, for which we paid as at a hotel.

Fort Ridgely is on a government reservation of several sections of land selected at the time the treaty was made with the Indians and placed on the reservation. But a celebrated war chief, named Ink-pa-du-ta, and his band never consented to the sale of the Sioux lands, declared themselves independent, would have nothing to do with the white man only to get his scalp, took the warpath, and early in March, 1857, made an attack on the scattered settlers around Spirit Lake near the northern line of Iowa, one hundred miles southwest of Fort Ridgely, killing all the settlers near the lake and several families on the Des Moines River in Minnesota, except four women who were taken prisoners and held for a ransom.[1] The names

[1] Other accounts of the Inkpaduta massacre and of the measures taken to rescue the four woman captives differ in detail from that of the present writer. Miss Gardner's story of her experiences is given in L. P. Lee, *History of the Spirit Lake Massacre, 8th March, 1857, and of Miss Abigail Gardiner's Three Months' Captivity among the Indians* (New Britain, Connecticut, 1857. 47 p.). Jareb Palmer, a member of

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of the women were Mrs. Noble, Mrs. Thatcher, Mrs. Marble, and Miss Gardner. Mrs. Noble, being sick and easily wearied and a burden to them, was shortly killed by the Indians. For some cause they killed Mrs. Thatcher also. Mrs. Marble was bought from them by two friendly Indians, sent out for the purpose by two missionaries, Riggs and Williamson, who paid to ransom her all the horses and guns they had; and the governor of the territory, Medary, paid the two friendly Indians twelve hundred dollars for their services and safe delivery of Mrs. Marble at Yellow Medicine Agency. It was learned that Miss Gardner had been sold to a Yankton Indian warrior, and in consideration of the twelve hundred dollars paid for the delivery of Mrs. Marble, many friendly Indians offered their services to undertake the rescue and return of Miss Gardner. Three Indians, prominent members of the Indian church, were selected for the work, one by the name of Other Day, who proved of great friendship and service to the whites at the time of the Sioux massacre in 1862 and was rewarded for it by the government. Horses, blankets, squaw cloth, ammunition, and many other articles which would please the Indians, valued at hundreds of dollars, were furnished this party of friendly Indians by the governor and Agent Flandrau,

the Springfield settlement on the Des Moines River in 1857, describes the massacres in detail in an article entitled "Early Days and Indians" in the *Plat Book of Jackson County, Minnesota,* 10–12 (Philadelphia, Inter State Publishing Company, 1887). See also Charles E. Flandrau, "Official Account of the Late Indian Difficulties," dated Sioux Agency, April 11, 1857, in United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs, *Reports,* 1857, pp. 69–71, and "The Ink-pa-du-ta Massacre of 1857" in *M. H. C.* 3: 386–407; *St. Paul Daily Pioneer and Democrat,* April 17–19, 21, 23, 24, June 5, 23, 24, 1857; Thomas Hughes, "Causes and Results of the Inkpaduta Massacre" in *M. H. C.* 12: 263–282; Asa W. Daniels, "Reminiscences of Little Crow" in *M. H. C.* 12: 518–520; Stephen R. Riggs, *Mary and I; Forty Years with the Sioux,* 138–144 (Chicago, c. 1880). Henry H. Sibley, "Sketch of John Other Day" in *M. H. C.* 3: 99–102, and "Narrative of Paul Mazakootemane," translated by Rev. S. R. Riggs, in *M. H. C.* 3: 83, contain interesting accounts of the part played by these two Indians in the rescue of Miss Gardner.

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with which to ransom the captive, and in less than thirty days Miss Gardner was secured and brought safely into St. Paul. Ink-pa-du-ta's son was killed, but, as far as known, the old chief and his band of outlaws all died natural deaths, honored by his people as the best haters of the whites in all the Sioux nation.[1]

While I was on this trip little was generally known of the massacre at Spirit Lake and still less of the captive women to produce public excitement or a demand for complete revenge. The news came just as we were about to leave for New Ulm, brought by a livery man who had just come in and who took us to New Ulm.

The ride was a lovely one through a new country, the most beautiful we had seen, reaching our destination just as the sun was casting its setting rays through the trees that were putting on their spring foliage. We put up at a German hotel with good accommodations. There was but one native American in this town of fifteen hundred people, and he was a very patriotic soldier of the Mexican War, owning the largest store in the place and kept in the only brick building yet erected, on which was a flag staff, from the top of which the stars and stripes floated every day, raised at the time the store was opened in the morning and lowered when it closed at night. He kept both German and Indian clerks to accommodate all classes and languages of customers in buying goods. There were two beer gardens in the town, one of them having an opera house connected with it, which we attended at night and witnessed a German play. The population of this place all

[1] The writer has apparently overlooked the punitive expedition sent out under the direction of W. J. Cullen, of the northern superintendency, consisting of about 125 Indians of the Upper and Lower Sioux under the command of Little Crow, which resulted in the killing of three members of the band, including another of Inkpaduta's sons, for an account of which see Cullen to John W. Denver, commissioner of Indian affairs, Lower Sioux Agency, July 26, 1857; K. Pritchette, special agent, to Denver, Sioux Agency, August 5, 1857; and the report of A. J. Campbell, United States interpreter with the expedition, in Commissioner of Indian Affairs, *Reports,* 1857, pp. 78–84, 86, 87–89.

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came from Cincinnati, two years previous, and with them more than five thousand others who settled on farms around New Ulm the first year the reservation was opened for settlement.[1] The Ink-pa-du-ta massacre at Spirit Lake alarmed these border settlers very much, and some of them had left their homes and taken their families into New Ulm for safety. Many of the leading men in town advised building a fort for their protection in case they were attacked by the Indians. A militia company was organized the night we were there, and a delegation took the first boat for St. Paul for the purpose of getting arms and ammunition for the new company. Settlers out on the Big Cottonwood River towards Spirit Lake, twenty miles from New Ulm, were daily coming in in large numbers to find refuge, adding greatly to the excitement and fears of another attack and possible repetition of the massacre of only six weeks previous. As a consequence we got little sleep that night, and next morning secured conveyance in a lumber wagon to Garden City, twenty-five miles southeast of New Ulm in Blue Earth Valley, where the men with me had friends and relatives living.

We passed through a fine prairie country, crossing the Big and Little Cottonwood rivers, passing several small lakes bordered with timber on the east side, where we invariably found a settler living in a log house, whose first inquiry was as to what we knew about the Spirit Lake massacre, and every one of them had gotten ready to move their families to some place of safety at a moment's notice.

[1] An account of the settlement of New Ulm through the efforts of two colonization societies, the Chicago Land Verein and the Colonization Society of North America of Cincinnati, is given in L. A. Fritsche, *History of Brown County, Minnesota,* 1: 124–138 (Indianapolis, 1916); Alexander Berghold, *The Indians' Revenge; or, Days of Horror,* 8–39 (San Francisco, 1891). The writer's estimate of the population of New Ulm and the adjacent country is somewhat too large; the census of 1860 gives Brown County a population of 2,339, and New Ulm, 635. *United States Census,* 1860, *Population,* 254, 255. Dr. Fritsche, however, consulting the files of the *New Ulm Pioneer* for 1858, gives the number of people in New Ulm in that year as 1,034, with 440 voters, the voters of the county being reported as 655. *History of Brown County,* 1: 467.

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We reached Garden City a little after noon and found the people at work building a log fort around a large, long boarding house owned by a company which was building a large grist and saw mill on the river, employing a large number of men. My traveling companions found their relatives all at work on the fort, as many families had left their farms and homes and come into town for mutual protection and safety. The most of these people had come from Boston, Massachusetts, and knew very little of wild western life or how to handle an ax, the principal tool to use in building a log fort. After dinner I saw the situation, got a good ax, and went to work with them on the fort, and before night had gained such a reputation for that kind of business that at evening I was chosen as one of the bosses on the job. In two days we had a half acre surrounded by defences of logs ten feet high. After it was finished and a number of families had tents inside, all the women and children felt much more secure.

Reports kept coming in that the situation looked worse every hour. Some families had already started to leave the territory until the Indian question was settled. I told them that New Ulm people had organized a militia company and sent a committee to the governor for arms and ammunition. The next day reliable news came direct from Fort Ridgely and the Indian agencies that Ink-pa-du-ta and his warriors had gone westward into Dakota. The man bringing this news had been sent out from Fort Ridgely and had letters with him from Agent Flandrau, Riggs and Williamson, the two missionaries, and also from the commander of the fort, advising all the settlers to return to their homes, as all danger had passed. During that week most of the settlers returned home and went to work again on their farms.[1]

[1] The feeling of general alarm throughout the Minnesota Valley and the organization of volunteer militia companies as a means of protection are reported in a letter from Flandrau to Francis Huebschmann, superintendent of Indian affairs, Fort Ridgely, April 16, 1857, in Commissioner of Indian Affairs, *Reports,* 1857, p. 72.

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I was given a good job on one of the mills which was being built, and had worked on it for two weeks when a Norwegian settler, living on the south branch of the Watonwan River twenty miles southwest of us, came riding into the village with the information that the Indians were burning and robbing the homes of the settlers on that river, and the families were either fleeing from that country or collecting together and preparing to defend themselves. In less than two hours families which had left the fort two weeks before were returning to it again, and that night it sheltered more people than before; and every report which came in was that the Indians were advancing down the river plundering the vacant homes or stealing all the stock which settlers had failed to drive off with them. No one had been reported killed, but every settler was on the run to save himself and family. Two days previous to this raid word had been received that Colonel Alexander's regiment had left Fort Ridgely by boat and gone to Fort Leavenworth to join the Mormon expedition, leaving no troops on the frontier for the protection of settlers except a sergeant and a few men to protect the fort. On account of the removal of the troops the settlers lost courage and felt that there was no hope or safety for them, and that they would be compelled to entirely abandon the country. Nothing gives a settler along a border of an Indian country greater confidence than knowing he is protected by his government through the presence of United States troops in adequate forces, the only thing that outlawed savages fear to keep them from plundering and killing the scattered settlers in detail. The next best possible thing for them to do is to congregate and build a fort, or organize themselves into military companies.

That evening in our log fort sixty men volunteered to sign the roll and form a territorial militia company, and they elected me captain and a young man by the name of Pease lieutenant. Pease was a picturesque character among us. He never wore anything but a buckskin suit or one made of some kind of fur. At the same time one hundred dollars was raised among us

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and turned over to me with instructions for Lieutenant Pease and myself to go at once to St. Paul and get arms and ammunition for the company and return as soon as possible. A team took us twelve miles to Mankato that night and in the morning we took a steamer which landed us at St. Paul the next morning in time for us to visit Governor Medary at his house before he was out of bed. He invited us to breakfast with him and at once ordered a team to be in readiness to take us to Fort Snelling. We first drove to the residence of United States Senator H. M. Rice, and the four of us were in Fort Snelling at nine a.m. We got sixty Springfield rifles, cartridge boxes, and plenty of ammunition, [and] at noon were at the boat landing ready to take the first up-river boat. After dinner at the fort Senator Rice gave me his personal check for two hundred dollars, with instructions to use it the best way to make our new territorial militia company comfortable. At two p.m. we and our Indian war equipment were on board the steamer "Favorite," the best and fastest boat on the river, and the next day at ten a.m. we were at Mankato and met teams and wagons from Garden City, which took us to Garden City fort in time to have the Garden City Sharpshooters, as they named themselves, drilling that afternoon. The experience and knowledge I had gained with the Sonora Grays in California less than two years before became of value to me then. The boys all thought from the way I formed them into platoons and back into line and other primary tactics, I must have been in the regular service.

For two weeks we kept up this drill daily and stayed close to our guns waiting for orders. Letters from the governor and Indian agents informed the settlers that no one had been killed during the last raid of the Indians; only one house burned, some cattle and horses stolen, several abandoned houses entered and goods carried off; that less than forty Indians had engaged in it, only for the purpose of theft and to frighten the settlers and make them leave the country; also, that two companies of regular infantry had been ordered to

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Fort Ridgely to protect the settlers from further depredations. Ink-pa-du-ta and his followers had nothing to do with this raid. The citizens of Garden City and vicinity took a lively interest in this home company and raised four hundred dollars to build an armory on the public square in the center of the village to be used for a drill room and public meetings. This company was kept up until the Civil War broke out, and gave the settlers around there much confidence of security during the years previous to that war from 1857 to 1861.[1] Then the government ordered all our guns and military outfit sent back to Fort Snelling to use in arming the First Regiment of Minnesota Volunteer Infantry, said to be the first volunteer regiment offered to the government in the War of the Rebellion. It also had the credit of losing the largest percentage of men during the four years' struggle for national life and liberty of any regiment. And I am informed by members of that regiment that the very guns the Minnesota militia had used were used in the first Bull Run battle by the First Minnesota Regiment of Volunteer Infantry.

During the year 1857 the great financial crisis of that period came over the country, making it very hard for all the newly settled parts. Minnesota had experienced a great boom common to new places and countries. New villages and cities had sprung up like mushrooms in nearly every county in the eastern half of the territory, in most cases built on borrowed capital at a rate of interest from one to three per cent per month, so that much of these new improvements by financial embarrassment became a dead loss to both borrower and lender. What little money I carried into the territory soon disappeared from my sight, so that in 1858 I easily figured that my six years of hard labor in the West had been a financial failure. I then decided not to try it any longer single-handed, and at once returned to Michigan and married Miss Diantha O.

[1] The reorganization of the Garden City Sharpshooters in 1859, under the captaincy of Mr. Potter, is noted in Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 99.

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DeGraff, to whom I had been engaged but a short time; and in November, 1858, returned with my wife to Garden City and commenced housekeeping in part of the log fort I had helped to build the previous year. My wife, being an experienced school-teacher, started a private school in our room, and [this], though small, gave pleasant occupation for her during her first cold winter in a new northwest country. It also had the historical reputation of being the first private school ever opened in that part of the country. In the meantime I ran the only grist mill in operation that winter. But about the first of January, 1859, it became so cold that the river froze nearly solid and the water wheels in the mill became a mass of solid ice and could not be started again until the following March, so that most of the people had to grind their corn and wheat for food in their hand coffee mills or pound it in a mortar for the next two months. As I lived in part of the house owned by the miller and worked for him, we managed to save out enough flour, meal, and buckwheat to last until the mill could be run again.

During 1859 and 1860 the country filled up rapidly with new settlers. The government kept a good force of troops along the borders of the settlements to keep the hostile Indians quiet and on their reservations. But in 1861, soon after the Civil War began, the Sioux Indians became bold and defiant, leaving their reservations without permission, and scattered settlers on the frontier were losing horses and cattle, and in two instances white children were missing, all charged to the renegade tribe of Sioux Indians.

In the spring and summer of 1862 Minnesota was called upon to furnish seven regiments of volunteers for the war. Two companies were enlisted from the Sioux reservations in the state. The Indian agents were nearly all openly opposed to the war and threw their hats in joy at any reverse to our arms. And the Indians soon learned that the North was divided, causing the hostile Indians to become more bold, running through the border settlements and causing an unusual

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feeling of uneasiness and alarm, from which many families fled from their homes to larger and older settlements for safety. An instance in my own family will illustrate one phase of Indian conduct to annoy and threaten us. One day, when my wife was alone with my little two-year-old daughter, two powerful six-foot Sioux came into the house without warning. One of them picked up the child as if to carry her off, while the other offered its mother a large new brass kettle for the child. She calmly and decidedly as possible rejected their offer and they left. After awhile they came again and brought two more Indians with them and the same brass kettle and a hogshead they had stolen in it, set it down heavily on the floor, and again offered it and the hogshead for the child, and, being again refused, went away apparently deeply disgusted, if not displeased, that their offer was not promptly accepted. The same day my wife was telling the incident to one of our neighbors, who warned her that unless she kept very close watch of the child they certainly would come in their sly way and steal her. They were thirty miles away from their reservation.

Six months later these same Indians were massacring hundreds of settlers all the way from the Canada line south to the border of Iowa. In 1863, after the Sioux had been driven from Minnesota, it was learned that these bands of Indians had been sent out by Little Crow (the most warlike chief of the Sioux) for the purpose of locating all the settlements and spying out their situation and strength and learning where to strike most safely and successfully when they commenced war on the whites the following August.[1] And they planned to involve

[1] Charles S. Bryant, a lawyer of St. Peter, who prosecuted over one hundred claims for damages before the United States commissioners appointed to award relief to persons for losses sustained during the Sioux outbreak, in his *History of the Great Massacre by the Sioux Indians in Minnesota* (St. Peter, Minnesota, 1872, c. 1863), likewise expresses his belief that the massacres of 1862 were the result of "a deep-laid conspiracy, long cherished by Little Crow, taking form under the guise of the 'Soldiers' Lodge,' and matured in secret Indian councils. In all these secret movements Little Crow was the moving spirit. He was the counselor, orator, and acknowledged chief." Mr.

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and associate the Winnebago tribe of Indians with them in the war on the whites and thus obtain over five hundred Winnebago warriors to assist them in the slaughter of the Minnesota settlements.

Before the Indians commenced their planned depredations, my wife and two small children left for Michigan, and I did not see them again until after all the hostile Indians had been driven westward out of Minnesota.

The hostile feeling towards the settlers on the part of the Indians located a few miles west of us and on the Winnebago reservation bordering Garden City two miles east of it, with several hundred warriors ready to join with the Sioux as soon as the first gun was fired, taken together with the recruiting by the government of the best and most available of our young [men] for service in the War of the Rebellion and rushing them south as fast as they were formed into regiments, all contributed to make the situation very unsafe for the people of the border settlements. The United States troops had all been ordered south from Forts Ridgely, Ripley, and Abercrombie, leaving only a sergeant with a few men to hold each

Bryant presents some interesting facts and testimony in support of his assertions (pp. 54–60). See also Moses N. Adams, "The Sioux Outbreak in the Year 1862, with Notes of Missionary Work among the Sioux" in *M. H. C.* 9: 434; and depositions of Thomas J. Galbraith and Stephen R. Riggs before the United States Sioux commissioners in 1863, in *Claims for Depredations by Sioux Indians,* 6–8, 10–12 (38 Congress, 1 session, *House Executive Documents,* vol. 9, no. 58—serial 1189). Dr. Asa W. Daniels, however, in his "Reminiscences of Little Crow" in *M. H. C.* 12: 524–527, credits Little Crow with being opposed to the uprising and quotes at length from Samuel J. Brown (a son of the well-known fur-trader and pioneer, Joseph R. Brown), who was a prisoner among the Indians from the beginning of the massacre. The Indians' version of the events leading up to the war may be ascertained from "A Sioux Story of the War," as related by Chief Big Eagle to Major R. I. Holcombe in June, 1894, in *M. H. C.* 6: 382–400; and from Edward A. Bromley's article "The Story of the Sioux Outbreak, Told by Warriors Who Participated" in the *Minneapolis Times,* August 15, 1897, in which Good Thunder, Chanta-Wanica, and Big Thunder, a brother of Little Crow, agree in asserting that Little Crow was not responsible for the outbreak.

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fort and protect its property. Every night for weeks the hostile Indians held councils for consultation and arrangements on their reservations before and up to the time Little Crow took the warpath.

On the morning of the twentieth of August, 1862, two German citizens from New Ulm came riding into Garden City with the alarm that the Sioux were massacring the settlers near Redwood Agency and Fort Ridgely and were within a short distance of New Ulm; that messengers had been sent to all the towns in the Minnesota River Valley east of New Ulm and up the Blue Earth Valley, warning them and appealing to them to hasten to the relief of New Ulm, as that was the largest and most important town in the Indian country west of Mankato. Within four hours from the time we received this news we had sixty men enlisted and mounted on farm horses, armed with all kinds of guns that could be had and I elected captain. In the meantime, during the excitement of preparation, the ladies of the village prepared a good dinner for us and plenty of rations to take with us, and about noon we formed into line with sixty as brave and determined men as could be found and started for New Ulm, twenty-five miles northwest of Garden City, the men and women clapping their hands and waving their handkerchiefs and cheering us bravely on even in their sadness at parting as we rode away. All the men of the place wanted to go with us, but there were not enough horses for all, so they had to content themselves by warning us not to lose our scalps on this first expedition.[1]

We followed the Mankato road three miles, where we struck a fresh Indian trail leading from the Winnebago agency

[1] A consideration of the progress of events as described in pages 439–445 makes it clear that the writer is in error here, and that the Garden City men reached New Ulm on the evening of Tuesday the nineteenth. Hughes also in his *History of Blue Earth County,* 114, tells of the dispatching of a squad of men under the leadership of Captain Potter on Tuesday to the assistance of New Ulm. G. K. Cleveland, however, in a letter dated Mankato, August 23, 1862, in the *St. Paul Daily Pioneer and Democrat,* August 26, 1862, says that before

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towards the Sioux agency, and were convinced that it was a party of Winnebagoes on their way the night before to join the Sioux. We followed this trail a short distance, then obliqued to the right to strike the Mankato and New Ulm wagon road, which ran on the south side of the Minnesota River, and reached it at the crossing of Butternut Creek, about ten miles from New Ulm. Here we found the first timber

reaching New Ulm on Wednesday night he "overtook quite a company of cavalry from Garden City, in company with Captains French and Potter."

Captain Potter's story of the occurrences at New Ulm, August 19–25, differs in many particulars from the accounts of others who were more or less concerned in them. Among these may be noted: Flandrau to Ramsey, New Ulm, August 20, 1862; to Sibley, New Ulm, August 22, 1862; to Ramsey, St. Peter, August 27, 1862, in *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars, 1861–1865,* 2: 165, 197, 202 (St. Paul, 1899); Flandrau, "The Indian War of 1862–1864 and Following Campaigns in Minnesota" in *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars,* 1: 731–733; "Judge Flandrau in the Defense of New Ulm during the Sioux Outbreak of 1862" in *M. H. C.* 10: 783–818 (part 2), by Major Salmon A. Buell, a member of the advance guard sent out by Flandrau from St. Peter on the nineteenth, and appointed by Flandrau as provost marshal and chief of staff on the twentieth; *Der Ausbruch der Sioux-Indianer in Minnesota im August 1862* (New Ulm, 1887), by Jacob Nix, who was captain of a volunteer company organized at New Ulm on the eighteenth and who was in command of the defenders during the battle on the nineteenth; "Reminiscences of the Little Crow Uprising" in *M. H. C.* 15: 323–336, by Dr. Asa W. Daniels, who accompanied Flandrau's command as surgeon; address delivered at the dedication of the monument erected by the state of Minnesota to the defenders of New Ulm, by Major E. C. Sanders, commander of the Le Sueur Tigers, in the *St. Paul Daily Globe,* August 23, 1891; *Mankato Semi-weekly Record,* August 23, 30, September 6, 1862; "The Sioux War" in the annual report of Adjutant General Malmros, in Minnesota, *Executive Documents,* 1862, pp. 421–429; Thomas J. Galbraith, agent for the Sioux of the Mississippi, to Clark W. Thompson, superintendent of Indian affairs, St. Paul, January 27, 1863, in Commissioner of Indian Affairs, *Reports,* 1863, pp. 266–298; "History of the Indian War," a report by Lieutenant Governor Donnelly to Ramsey, dated Fort Ridgely, August 29, 1862, in Commissioner of Indian Affairs, *Reports,* 1862, pp. 59–68; *The Indians' Revenge; or, Days of Horror; Some Appalling Events in the History of the Sioux,* 106–123, 130–141, by Alexander Berghold, who came to New Ulm in 1868 and organized the first Catholic church in Brown County.

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since leaving Garden City. Near Butternut Creek we met four families with teams and stock, fleeing for safety under great excitement, and they told us we would get killed if we did not go back, as the Indians in large numbers were massacring all they could find, and [they] begged us to return and escort them to Mankato. They, however, had not seen an Indian themselves for a week, but it had the effect of alarming some of our boys for the safety of their families they had left at Garden City, who wanted to return and protect them. So four of our men decided to return home, but agreed to go with these four families and protect them six miles on their way, where they would leave the main road for Garden City. This left us with fifty-six men.

After crossing the creek we came to the large log house of the oldest settler in the country by the name of Shaw, known to all people of that country. He was then over seventy years of age and for ten years his house had been a stopping-place for all who had traveled that road. We found him and three of his neighbors preparing his house for a siege against the Indians. Yet he thought the Indians would not harm him and his wife, as they knew many of the Indian leaders well, had treated them kindly, and were the oldest people living west of St. Paul in the Minnesota Valley. Just then a party of four land lookers with a double team drove up from Madelia, thirty miles southwest, to stop overnight with "Uncle Shaw." They had met and talked with the party of Winnebagoes, numbering about one hundred, most of them on ponies, young men and well armed, decorated for war, who said they were going to visit the Sioux. These land lookers had heard nothing of the Indian outbreak until we told them. They were young men from Wisconsin and [were] well armed with guns and revolvers. We invited them to go with us and they decided to do so, making our number good.

From Butternut Creek we had five miles of open prairie before reaching Little Cottonwood River and no settlers on the road; then three miles to Big Cottonwood River, making

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fast time, as it was getting late in the day, and we were anxious to reach New Ulm before dark. While making these three miles, we saw to our left, about two miles off, a party moving towards New Ulm. Our Wisconsin friends took a look at them through their field glasses and said they were white people with ox teams. When we reached the high bluff of the Big Cottonwood, we could look over the intervening timber and see the young German city of New Ulm nearly three miles away. Suddenly we were startled to see several buildings in the west part of the city on fire. It was a beautiful clear sky, and the sun was just disappearing from sight in the west. We at once concluded that the Indians were burning the town. We had a half mile of timber and willow brush to go through in reaching the open ground on the opposite side of the river, and many of our men thought it would be used as an ambush by the Indians and be sure death to us to try to go through while they were there burning the place. But I told them we had already passed two places fully as bad for ambush as this, and to go back we would have to pass them again, and it would be safer for us to go on to New Ulm from the east side while they were burning the west part than to go back, if the Indians knew we were making for home over the same road we came. I said the situation was a critical one and there was no time to lose, and what we did must be done at once; that they had elected me their commander less than eight hours before to lead them to New Ulm, and now we were in plain sight of where we knew they badly needed our help, and were we going to leave them to their fate? and [I] said, "I say to you as your commander that it will be a disgrace to us." Most of them gave me a cheer, and said, "Go ahead and we will follow you." I ordered them to follow in single file and put their horses on the run until we struck the prairie on the other side of the river; and, in less time than it takes to write this story, we were on the west bank of the river, formed into four ranks, and our horses on the gallop into the eastern part of the city, while the Indians were scalping men, women, and children in

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the western part of it. The city had a population of about fifteen hundred.

As we reached the road running down the Minnesota River Valley on the north side, we met two companies of militia, one from St. Peter under command of Captain Dodd, the other from Le Sueur, commanded by Captain Sanders, one of the leading ministers of the Minnesota Valley, both companies mounted and together making about one hundred men. Then, as we looked back over the road we had just come, we saw another company coming at full speed from Mankato under Captain Bierbauer, of about fifty men, giving us in all full two hundred men. Captain Sanders taking the lead, we at once swept through the main business street of the city, four abreast, as fast [as] our horses could carry us, and we were within half a mile of the Indians before they knew of our presence, taking them by surprise and causing every one of them instantly to drop his torch and scalping knife and to mount his pony in the utmost haste and scatter, each one for himself, in the direction of his reservation. There were about one hundred of them. They had burned two of the breweries and twenty-one residences, and, had not these military companies come just in time to prevent it, they no doubt would have burned the entire town and massacred the people that night, as they were having their own way and [there was] no armed force to check them.

As we could not follow the Indians after they scattered and [as] it was getting dark, we returned to the city and took care of our horses as well as we could. Coffee was furnished us by the ladies, and with the rations brought from home we had a good campaign supper the first night out.

Colonel Charles E. Flandrau, a former Indian agent, had arrived from St. Peter during the afternoon and been placed in command of the city. He had ordered it placed under martial law, placed guards on all roads leading out of the city with orders to allow every person to come in, but no one to pass out unless by a permit from him.

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Nineteen dead bodies were brought in that evening, killed inside the city limits, all scalped and mutilated in other ways, mostly women and children. The bodies were laid in a row on the floor of a blacksmith shop, where every person could take a view of them, making a scene such as none of us had ever witnessed before. And it made most of them who had left their families that day to rescue this city feel anxious to return to the protection of their own homes at once. In eight hours after leaving home, twenty-five miles away, they had met the Indians and driven them away, saw the destruction of property by fire, and looked upon a score of women and children who had been tomahawked and scalped by these savages, Many of my men asked for a pass that night to go home, but Colonel Flandrau refused them and said that if we all stayed and whipped the Indians there, they would not penetrate the more settled country east of us; but if we abandoned New Ulm we might lose the entire state. However, the most of my men were determined to go home. Four of them left their horses that night, escaped through the guard on foot, and started for home. Two of them got lost and went in the wrong direction and nearly lost their lives before reaching home. The next morning all but fifteen signed a petition asking for a pass to return home that they might protect their own families, and the other companies did the same. Colonel Flandrau called all the captains together for consultation. They all agreed to stand by him, but we admitted that if these men were determined to leave, they would be of little use in an emergency. My men had said to me that morning, "If our families were east like yours, we would gladly stay and fight it out here; but place yourself in our positions and then answer the question as to what you would do if your own family was within twenty-five miles of you and exposed to slaughter." I admitted that my first duty would be to protect them.

The meeting of the officers resulted in a decision to give passes to men who had families to return home at once. Some

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of the men who had good rifles, upon leaving, exchanged them with those who had only shot guns, which were of little use in Indian warfare; and a few left their guns and ammunition also, as they felt sure that we had a fight on our hands.

When all had left, I had fifteen out of my sixty men remaining. About the same was the case with the other companies. After these men had left, some were in favor of evacuating the town, but Colonel Flandrau and many others would not listen to that, as there were over two hundred recruits at Fort Snelling who could be armed and sent to our relief at once, and he believed they would be there within forty-eight hours. This was Wednesday, August 20th. The day before, Indians had been murdering people all along the western line of Minnesota, and by Thursday night five or six hundred refugees, some of them wounded, had reached New Ulm for safety. Hospitals were extemporized for the sick and wounded, making a great demand for doctors and nurses.

No Indians had been seen near New Ulm during the day, but four companies of militia arrived, one from Blue Earth City, one [from] Shelbyville, one from Waseca, and one from Henderson, in all about two hundred men, which greatly renewed our confidence. That night word was received from up the Big Cottonwood River, fifteen miles away, that one hundred settlers, men, women, and children, had taken refuge in a swamp near Leavenworth, which was surrounded by Indians. This information came to us by two men, one of them with an arm broken by a shot from an Indian. We at once organized a force of one hundred men to go to their relief, to start as soon as possible, still leaving a force of one hundred fifty well-armed men to protect the city. During the day we could hear the cannon booming at Fort Ridgely on the Sioux agency [*reservation*], eighteen miles up Minnesota River, which meant that the main body of the Sioux had attacked the fort. Before starting to relieve the people surrounded in the swamp about ten miles south of Fort Ridgely, Colonel

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Flandrau gave us orders that if the firing at Fort Ridgely ceased, to return at once to New Ulm.

We started out mounted, and taking several wagons with us to bring in the sick and wounded. Before we were out of sight of the city we found dead bodies, and before reaching the besieged settlers we had found sixty-five slain by the Indians. During all of this time the firing at Fort Ridgely continued. Many scattered Indians were seen during our march, but they kept out of reach of our guns. We found the surrounded people we went to relieve to be all foreigners. Very few of them could speak a word of our language. They had been attacked by the Indians on Tuesday, the 19th, and had been in the swamp three days, during which time six had died and were still unburied, in which condition we were obliged to leave them. The wounded and women and children were put in the wagons and we started to return. We had only gotten fairly started when a man came riding towards us greatly excited and said that three families with their teams were surrounded by the Indians within two miles of us and would all be killed unless they had help at once. We halted our train and decided to send half of our force to their rescue. We soon found the wagons, but were too late to save the people. All had been murdered and scalped.

After starting on our march we saw that Fort Ridgely was burning, the guns had ceased firing, and we concluded that the fort had been captured by the Indians. We knew that in that case New Ulm would be the next place to be attacked. It was now nearly night and we were fifteen miles from New Ulm by the shortest route; and if we took that route, we would have to cross the Cottonwood River three times, exposing us to three bad places for the Indians to trap us in ambuscades. Scattering Indians were in sight watching our movements. We knew they were cowardly and would never make an attack on an armed force in the night. We therefore decided to take the river road, which was ten miles shorter than the prairie road we came over. So, as soon as it was dark, we started,

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meeting with no trouble and reaching New Ulm before daylight on Saturday, August 23rd.[1]

The four Wisconsin men who joined us at Butternut Creek proved to be made of the right kind of stuff for fighting Indians, but one of them had been taken violently ill on Friday while on the Cottonwood trip, and on Saturday morning he desired to start for his home, and his companions promised him he should go. So Saturday these four men started for St. Peter, thirty miles down the river, where they had to cross by ferry. Soon after crossing, they were attacked by Indians that had been sent out from Fort Ridgely to destroy the ferry at New Ulm, and three of them were killed. The other one reached his home in Wisconsin.

After destroying the two ferries at New Ulm to prevent escape by those routes, the entire force of Indians that had been besieging Fort Ridgely for three days appeared at nine o'clock on Saturday morning and made a desperate attack on the west side with a determined purpose to burn the city and murder all who were in it, and then strike Mankato and reach the Winnebago agency, where they were sure that from three to six hundred Winnebago warriors would join them in massacring the whites.

The Indians were greatly disappointed in not cutting off our party the day before on the Cottonwood River as they had planned to do, but our night march and getting into New Ulm before daylight deceived them, and no doubt saved our lives, and was one of the causes of saving the city and people from destruction also.

During their attack on New Ulm two men might be seen almost in front and a little to the right of the Indians at their work of death, entering the city on the run from a narrow skirt of timber on the west side of the bluff. They were from Lake Shetek, sixty-five miles west of New Ulm, where there

[1] Compare with the account by Major Buell in *M. H. C.* 10: 792 (part 2), and with that of Dr. Daniels in *M. H. C.* 15: 327, both of whom were members of the relief expedition to Leavenworth.

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was a settlement of about one hundred persons, the farthest west of any settlement of the state. On Monday, the 18th, the Indians had attacked them. They had defended themselves as long as possible. On Tuesday night these two men, named W. H. Dooley [*W. J. Duly*] and Henry W. Smith, with their wives who were sisters, and their six children, and one team, started for New Ulm. Early on Wednesday the Indians overtook them. They abandoned their wagon and concealed themselves in the long grass, but during the day the Indians killed the six children, and captured the two women, who were held prisoners for eleven months until the government ransomed them for two thousand dollars in gold. The two men made their escape, and supposed their wives as well as the children were dead up to the time they were brought in after being redeemed. They had come into Minnesota as hunters and trappers long before it was a state, in advance of any regular settlers; had become well acquainted and were very friendly with the Indians and could speak their language readily. They had bravely fought the fifty Indians who attacked their homes for nearly two days, the Indians themselves admitting afterwards that these two men had killed five of them in that time before they decided to abandon it and seek safety in flight. As will be narrated hereafter, at the subsequent execution of thirty-eight Sioux chiefs for these murders, W. H. Dooley asked and was granted the privilege of cutting the rope that sent them from the scaffold to their imagined hunting grounds. These two men afterwards helped constitute the cavalry company which I subsequently helped form as first lieutenant, Company B, Mounted Rangers, but before we were mustered into service, Dooley was made chief of scouts over seventy-five friendly and loyal Indians, with the rank of captain, and held that position until the close of the Indian war. H. W. Smith was a first-class soldier, and served in my company until the regiment was mustered out. Both men have now passed away, but the two sisters and wives, when I last heard

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from them, were still living together in Blue Earth County, Minnesota.[1]

Let us return now to the battle of New Ulm. This second attack was made mainly upon the west side of the city where the first one was, where buildings had already been burned and people murdered. As they came on with their ponies on the run, yelling and whooping and singing their war songs, painted in all colors, some nearly naked and others with blankets and feather headdresses flying, they made a bold dash to cut off Dooley and Smith and capture or kill them. This dash cost us two men and cost them the lives of several of their warriors. For three days our men had been busy throwing up breastworks at different points around the borders of the city, and between two and three hundred men were [stationed] behind them, besides fifty or more men on horseback. The Indians had spread out before us like a great fan, riding back and forth, coming closer and closer, leaning on the opposite side of their ponies and firing at us from under their horses' necks, their yells and war whoops becoming more fierce as they came nearer. Suddenly a panic seized our men in the trenches and those on horseback, and together they made a wild rush for the center of the city, followed by the Indians

[1] Captain Potter seems to be quite alone in his belief that Mrs. Smith was taken captive by the Indians along with her sister Mrs. Duly and other women and children, and later ransomed. The most reliable reports agree in saying that Mrs. Smith was among those of the party of refugees who were killed on August 20. Compare Mrs. Eastlick's story of her experiences at the massacre of Lake Shetek, related in a pamphlet entitled *Thrilling Incidents in the Indian War of 1862; Being a Personal Narrative of the Outrages and Horrors Witnessed by Mrs. L. Eastlick in Minnesota* (Minneapolis, 1864. 37 p.); *Mankato Semi-weekly Record*, August 30 and October 18, 1862, January 31, 1863; *St. Paul Daily Pioneer and Democrat*, September 3, 1862. See also James Starkey, *Reminiscences of Indian Depredations*, 21–24 (St. Paul, 1891), in which is given an account of an expedition to Lake Shetek in October, 1863, for the purpose of interring the remains of those who were killed at that place. Captain Starkey's company acted as escort, and among the members of the party were Mr. Duly and Mr. Smith.

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yelling and whooping louder and fiercer than ever. But when they came to the dwellings, they began to stop to plunder them and set fire to them. But this aided to stop the panic of our men, when they saw that they were not so fiercely pursued.

In attempting to check the flight, Captain Sanders, the minister commanding the Le Sueur company, was seriously wounded and fell from his horse. My horse was shot and killed from under me either by the Indians or our own panic-stricken men firing as they retreated. Several men were thus injured while with me in the rear trying to check and rally the fugitives, some of whom on foot and others on horses never stopped until they reached their homes from ten to forty miles away. A few were killed by the Indian scouts sent out to guard the roads leading east from the city and prevent the escape of our men. The previous night Colonel Flandrau had ordered a barricade built through the main street to protect the refugees and their families who had come into the city for refuge, and also as a central rallying point for our men if driven in. It consisted of wagons in two lines, on each side of the street, each wagon a few feet apart and plank run between them. This was about forty rods long with a space of eight feet between the barricades. It was almost completed when the panic occurred, and most of our men took possession of it. This, with the Indians stopping to plunder and burn houses, gave them time to recover confidence and courage and to determine to give the Indians the best fight there was in us. That delay of an hour on the part of the Indians was our salvation. But by noon they were burning houses in nearly all directions on the outskirts of the town.

Up to this time no help had come. We had learned that one hundred men under General Sibley were at St. Peter, armed but without ammunition, waiting to come to our relief as soon as ammunition could be obtained. A large body of men had appeared on the opposite side of the river near the lower ferry, which had been destroyed, and they left, not being able to cross. They were two companies of militia from Henderson

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and Shakopee, [who], when seeing the city on fire on all sides and the ferry destroyed, concluded to return to St. Peter. About two o'clock the wind began to blow strongly from the east, and the Indians decided to set fire on that side, thus driving it into the business part of the city and burn us out completely. For that purpose about five hundred of them, mounted, gathered on a hill on the Mankato road leading into the town and were approaching at a distance, when the report started that it was Sibley coming to our relief. Captain Dodd was so certain of it that he started out on his fine black horse to meet them. In vain we tried to stop him. He went on at full speed until the Indians fired a volley at him. He then turned back and fell dead before he reached us, pierced by many balls, and soon his horse also fell dead.

As the Indians were making this desperate effort to burn us out, Colonel Flandrau saw that something must be done at once to prevent it, and called for volunteers to go and drive them out of a thick piece of oak brush running along the north side of the Mankato road, which they had taken possession of as a shelter and ambush to work from, covering some five acres of ground. I had just been struck by two buckshot in my left cheek, which momentarily stunned me. I fell and, seeing I was hit in the face, those with me thought I was dead and took my Sharp's rifle, Colt's revolver, and ammunition, and were about to leave me, when I recovered and was taken to the nearest hospital. Doctor McMahan examined my wounds, took the shot from my face, told me I was not badly injured, gave me a little stimulus, and I at once started as one of the volunteers in driving the Indians from their shelter in the brush. We had about one hundred of our best men, well armed, led by Colonel Flandrau, and [we] dashed into that brush with a rush and war whoop that made the Indians conclude we could fight and beat them at their own game. It was a bloody, close-range, desperate fight. A number on both sides were killed. Colonel Flandrau's clothes were in many places pierced with bullets, and his gunstock

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also. A fine-looking young man by my side was shot in the mouth, his tongue cut off, and he died the next day. But in fifteen minutes we had driven them away, and they made no attempt to burn us out again that day from that direction. But from their movements that afternoon, aside from the burning of some houses on the outskirts, we were sure that another attack would be made by them, as they expected to be reinforced. So when night came, they built fires south and west of us out of range of our guns, and held war dances all night long, preparing for the fight the next day.

Colonel Flandrau called a council of all the officers and discussed the situation in all its features. Some were for vacating the place that night, but others knew the Indians best and were certain that would result in death to us all. At last we decided on burning all the buildings that would stand in our way or afford shelter to the Indians in an attack upon our barricade or fortification on the main street. We burned about forty buildings during the night, and those left were barricaded as much as possible and portholes made. Our best men and guns were put in these houses and [the men] instructed not to fire until the Indians were within close range. Ammunition was scarce, and every shot must count for the best. Some of the women engaged in casting bullets, others in preparing bandages and making coffee and carrying it around to the men. During the night the men kept busy strengthening our fortifications in every possible way. Some few, who felt sure we would all be massacred the next day, stole away and left for their homes. Some reached them, and some did not. When Sunday morning came, we all felt confident that the Indians could not conquer us. During the night some of the men had extemporized a cannon in appearance from stovepipe mounted on wheels, and placed one at each end of our barricade where the Indians could see them. They are superstitiously afraid of a cannon. Near these they placed blacksmiths' anvils to do the firing with in case they made an attack in a body. Soon after daylight we could see the Indians forming in large bodies on the east

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and south of the city. Soon about fifty appeared on the west for the purpose of drawing our men out of our barricades in that direction. They put on a bold front and came within rifle range and dared us to come out for a fair fight, but our men kept under cover and held their fire. In the meantime their main parties from the south and east were advancing in battle array, their leaders on ponies making a great display beating Indian drums and other instruments, mingled with war whoops to lead them on to victory and slaughter. As they came nearer, they all looked as if freshly painted for that Sunday morning's deadly work. It was clear from the large numbers in sight that they had received heavy reinforcements in the night. Occasionally a gun was fired by them, but not a gun had yet been fired by us. They were led by an Indian dressed in white men's clothes, [with] a tall silk hat on, and mounted on a fine American horse, all of which he had stolen. They halted within twenty rods of the east end of our barricade, when orders were given our men to fire, and such a volley as they had never experienced before poured into them from all the houses and the east part of the barricade. As soon as the smoke cleared away, we saw the fatal effect of the volley on their ranks, and most of them were hurrying away from us very much faster than they came. The fine horse, [which] the silk-hatted chief, Little Crow, [was] riding proudly a moment before, lay dead, with a number of his warriors. At the instant of firing the volley into their ranks, the stovepipe cannon, with the anvils to make the noise, were also let loose on them several times for the moral effect, and as we afterwards learned, they believed that during the night we had got some of the cannon from Fort Ridgely to use on them.

The Indians now withdrew about two miles west onto the bluffs in plain sight and held a council and soon disappeared. As soon as we were sure they had left for good, we decided to evacuate the town at once, as we had about two thousand people to care for in less than thirty houses, eighty wounded and dying for want of proper care, and not provisions enough

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to last twenty-four hours, with no prospect of relief from the towns below. Orders were at once given for all the teams to be gotten ready to take the sick and wounded to Mankato, and by noon we were ready to start. No sadder sight than we were about to leave could well be presented. For five days men, women, and children had lain dead in the little city, many others badly wounded without proper attention, the most of the city now a smouldering ruin, and every inhabitant a fleeing fugitive from his home; and if the Indians learned of our evacuation, they could massacre us all before reaching Mankato. When [we were] ready to start, it was found that a number of wagons were loaded with household stuff, which was ordered taken out, except bedding for the wounded. When [we were] nearing the Cottonwood River, Captain Cox with one hundred men was met coming to our relief. When informed of the situation, he countermarched his men to return with us. Reaching the bluff of the Big Cottonwood, Senator Swift (afterwards governor of Minnesota), in command of the rear guard, noticed that the stars and stripes had been left flying from the Fuller Block in New Ulm, the only brick building in the city, and he at once halted his two companies and said it should be taken down and saved, and called upon one of his companies to go back and save it. They hesitated and thought it unnecessary to spend the time and run the risk. I said to him, "If you will let me take your horse and [will] hold your companies here, I will bring you that flag in fifteen minutes." I took the horse, a good one, and returned safely with the flag, and received the hearty cheers of the two companies, mostly Germans, who thought the deed a dangerous one. In passing through the building to reach the flag, I had to step over two dead bodies on the second floor, which had been used for a hospital.

We soon overtook the rear of our train, and reached Mankato early on Monday morning, having kept on the march all night. It was stated that nine of the wounded had died on the way. With us on this retreat was a Swede woman, who had

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lost her husband and three children before reaching New Ulm for safety, and was herself wounded in her left arm. While on the way from New Ulm to Mankato she gave birth to a boy, and I have recently learned that at the present time this boy, now forty-five years old, is living in Montana.

After we reached Mankato, we found that almost all the settlers in Minnesota were leaving for Wisconsin, bound to put the Mississippi River between them and the hostile Indians, this stampede being caused largely by the burning of New Ulm on [the] Saturday previous, and the report that all who had gone to our relief had been murdered by the Indians. Colonel Flandrau at once decided that something must be done at once to stop the stampede; and he called for three men to take the best horses that could be had and take three different roads and let the people know that we had whipped the Indians, who had returned to their reservations. I volunteered to go for one of the three, and got a good horse of Daniel Tyner, the sheriff of Blue Earth County, which had been in the siege of New Ulm and which I had ridden some after my horse was killed. While the horse was being fed and gotten ready, I took breakfast with Mr. Piper and his wife from Garden City. My shirt and left side were still covered with blood from the wound in my face, and Mrs. Piper wanted me to put on some clean clothes, which I declined to do, as in going out to stop the people from leaving the country, my bloody clothing would be positive proof that I had been in the fight at New Ulm and had come to let them know that it was a fact that we had whipped the Indians.

Before starting, Colonel Flandrau handed me an order reading about as follows: "I have ordered Captain Potter, who has been with me for five days in the siege of New Ulm, to inform all settlers who are leaving the state on account of the Sioux war that the Indians have been whipped at New Ulm and driven back onto their reservations; and that he is authorized to say to you that it will be safe for you to return to your homes. I have empowered him to place guards on all roads

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and bridges to give all this information; and also empowered him to press any horse he needs into his service for these purposes. By order of Charles E. Flandrau, Commander-in-Chief of State Militia."

As I mounted my horse to start on my mission, a stranger stepped up to me and handed me a new Colt's revolver, belt and ammunition, saying, "You may need this; keep it until I call for it." I strapped both on with one belt and bid the boys good-bye and rode rapidly away. The first twelve miles was through a timbered country, which I made in about seventy-five minutes, reaching the Winnebago Indian agency and giving the agent the first news he had received of the result of the fight at New Ulm. I also showed him my orders from Colonel Flandrau. Many of the Winnebagoes were present and much excited. He informed them of the situation through an interpreter and called on one of the boss farmers of the reservation to take six of his most reliable Indians and escort me to Wilton, twelve miles just east of the reservation line in Waseca County. We passed many settlers on the way with wagons loaded with their families, to whom we announced the defeat of the Indians and told them it would be safe for them to return to their homes. At Wilton we had to cross the Le Sueur River on a long wooden bridge, and at once obtained a guard for it, and gave them orders not to allow teams going east to pass, and also posted a copy of my orders on the bridge for all to read for themselves. Some became very angry and [were] disposed to force their way across. Among these were some of my well-known neighbors from Garden City, fleeing from the state.

As an illustration of the intense panic of the people I will mention the case of John Thompson from six miles south of Garden City, where he owned and worked a large farm, who had left his home in the night with his family and two wagons of household goods, determined to cross the river, saying he could see Garden City on fire at the time he left; and, though he knew I was in the fight at New Ulm, he believed I was only

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one of the few who escaped, and that within a week the entire state would be in the hands of the Sioux. And he told me if I had any hopes for the country, he would give me a deed for all his land if I would give him enough for it to get himself and family across the Mississippi River. I told him that he would be back to his home within ten days, which proved true, and then left him to hurry on to Waseca, fifteen miles further east, accompanied by two other mounted men. On our way we met a company of sixty mounted men from Dodge County, to whom I showed my orders, and they returned with us to Waseca.

As I had ridden my horse forty miles in six hours, he showed signs of giving out. I told the captain of this company that I wanted to go on to Owatonna that night, and must have the best horse to be gotten in Waseca, and wanted him to have Colonel Flandrau's orders copied and sent out on every road and stop people from leaving the state. While a horse was being provided me, this was done, and the orders carried out in every direction by the captain's command. By this time the buckshot wounds in my face had become very painful. I had a physician examine them, who told me that they should be attended to at once, as there was danger of blood poisoning setting in. I told him that I would attend to it as soon as I reached Owatonna. It was now nearly four o'clock, and twenty-five miles yet to ride. Two men of this militia lived in Owatonna and the captain had them accompany me. We passed many teams hurrying across the Mississippi River, all of whom we told it would now be safe for them at their homes. Among these were several men who knew me, and my bloody shirt and [the] wounds in my face and [the] revolvers in my belt convinced them that I had been in the fight and told them the truth about it.

We reached Owatonna at seven o'clock and gave them their first information of the defeat of the Indians, which gave much joy. After having my horse cared for, I told the landlord I wanted a good surgeon to attend to my face, and in less than

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five minutes I had two physicians attending the first wounded man in that town from the seat of the Indian war. In probing and cleaning out the wound, they found a sliver which had gotten into it by the shot first passing through the board of a fence near which I stood at the time for partial protection. I informed the doctors that I had not had my clothes off for six days and did not remember taking any sleep during all that time. They got me a clean shirt and a pair of pants in exchange for the bloody ones, but I told them I believed my bloody clothes and wounded face, with Colonel Flandrau's orders, had done more than anything else that day to stop hundreds of people and get them to return to their homes, and [that I] had better wear them. I washed my face, borrowed a night shirt, and went to bed, after ordering a good fresh horse or team to be ready for me to start at twelve o'clock that night for Albert Lea, forty miles south of Owatonna. A man with a good team was found to take the ride with me. Before going to bed, I told the doctors that, as I could do little myself that night, I wished they would see some of the citizens and have Colonel Flandrau's orders printed and distributed the next day in all directions. I then got four hours' sleep before being called up to take the night ride to Albert Lea, on which we started at one o'clock.

During our six hours' ride we were halted four times by camp guards put out to watch against Indians. Being well supplied with extra copies of the paper containing Colonel Flandrau's order and the news from New Ulm, we distributed them in all the camps of settlers as well as those on the move during the night. By seven o'clock Tuesday morning we were at Albert Lea, and gave them also the first good news they had received from New Ulm. We found a greater crowd of settlers here rushing out of the state than we had found anywhere else, as nearly all south and west of Mankato had taken a southern route to avoid crossing the Winnebago reservation. At Albert Lea there were two roads leading east to the Mississippi River, one crossing at La Crosse and the other

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going into the northern part of Iowa and crossing the river at Prairie du Chien. Men were sent out at once on horses to notify those who had passed through town the day before or during the night of the needlessness of their going farther. So I concluded to stay there until noon, then ride to Wells, forty miles west in Faribault County. By this means I got another short sleep which I greatly needed, and a fresh poultice on my face. My bloody clothes still attracted much attention, and many wild and foolish questions were asked me by men who were so frightened as to be determined to get the great river between them and the Indians before feeling safe.

After a good dinner I mounted a fresh horse, which took me into Wells in less than six hours. Here the news of the defeat of the Indians had reached them, and most of the refugees had gone into camp waiting for further information to confirm it before starting back to their homes. I found one camp where they were burying a woman who had died from fright; and another where one had died from overexposure; and many incidents of this kind could be given to show the sufferings caused by this Indian outbreak.

I stayed at Wells overnight, and found several men I knew, four of whom had gone with me to New Ulm and taken part in the first day's fight and then left to go and look after their families. Next day, the excitement at Wells having subsided and most of the families preparing to return to their homes, I made arrangements for a fresh horse to take me back to Mankato by the way of Minnesota Lake, Mapleton, and Garden City, a distance of fifty miles, meeting on the way but few teams or camps of refugees in comparison with the previous days, to whom the now-old story was told, some of whom had camped only to wait to have the good news confirmed.

At Mapleton I found the most of our Garden City people in camp waiting to see me, as they had heard I was to return to Garden City that way. As I rode into their camp, they gave me three cheers, and the man in command of the camp was the one who gave me his horse to ride when I left for

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New Ulm in command of our militia company. The first question he asked me was, what had become of his horse, and I told him that in our fight the Indians had taken his horse with them to their looked-for happy hunting grounds beyond the clouds where he would probably be well taken care of, as they knew he was a "brave" horse, killed right in the front line of battle, with a number of them, in his faithful discharge of duty, about ten o'clock that Saturday. He said it was a good horse, and that some one would have to pay for it. I assured him he should be paid for his horse, took dinner with them, and they told me they would all start back for Garden City next day, if no bad news came.

I reached Garden City at sunset, not one of its people being willing to come with me, nor did I meet any one on all this fifteen miles' ride, the country seeming to have been wholly deserted. In this village of four hundred population the week before, not one was left. I put my horse in the same stable from which the one was taken that I rode and was killed; then went to some of the business houses and found two open, and helped myself to coffee, crackers, cheese, and sardines. I went to my own home, made a fire, and got my supper; washed up and exchanged my week-old, blood-stiff clothes for entire clean ones; went to the barn and took good care of my horse; then went to the Williams store and spread a bolt of cotton cloth on the floor, took a roll of cotton batting for a pillow, and lay down and slept soundly until daylight next morning. After breakfast I rode around town to different places and found the doors locked and everything undisturbed, and started for Mankato, supposing I was the only person in town that night; but I afterwards learned that a Polish doctor with his wife and six children, for whom there was no conveyance when all the others left, had stayed overnight in the log schoolhouse as the safest place they could find. They barricaded the doors and windows and stayed there for four days, until most of the people had come back to their homes.

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Before reaching Mankato, I met the two Williams brothers of Garden City, merchants, with two other men going back home, and I assured them the village was all right, as I slept in their store, but had come away and forgotten to make up my bed. They said the people believed the Indian war was over and had been looking for my return and report as to the condition of the country I had been through the past three days. I told them that Garden City people would return that day, and then rode on, and was soon in Mankato and at the headquarters of Colonel Flandrau, giving him a verbal report of my mission, he approving and complimenting the work I had done.

The colonel told me he had been ordered to make his headquarters at South Bend, three miles west of Mankato, and wanted me to act as one of his aides, with the rank of first lieutenant, to carry dispatches back and forth in the Indian country, and to take command of a number of men to be detailed to serve at headquarters. He also said I had been elected first lieutenant of a company raised the day before to be stationed at South Bend, and that he would give me all the work I would want to do for the next thirty days. That night we were quartered at South Bend in a large hotel, which made fine accommodations for the company of sixty men who were to be mounted on the best of horses and prepared for special duty.

My first outside duty was to carry a dispatch to Fort Ridgely, to take twenty men with me and stay overnight; and [we] were there to meet General Sibley with two thousand men, who were preparing to follow and chastise the Indians for the depredations and murders they had recently committed. While at the fort, I visited the hospital and saw ten wounded men who had escaped, of Captain Marsh's company, which was ambushed by the Indians at the ferry-crossing of Redwood Agency, and nearly all destroyed; also several others wounded at the ambush, Birch Coolie. These [ambuscades], with the

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one afterwards of General Custer's in Montana, were considered the worst ever perpetrated by the Indians in this country.

My next important dispatch duty took me not long afterwards to Fort Snelling, seventy-five miles, to carry there the news of General Sibley's victory over the Indians in his battle with them at Wood Lake, near the Yellow Medicine Agency, about thirty-five miles northwest of Fort Ridgely. In carrying this dispatch, I took only one man with me, as there was little or no danger, and made the ride in one day. After stopping over one day at Fort Snelling and St. Paul, I was ordered to take sixty mounted men, selected from different militia companies, and make a forced march to Madelia, twenty-five miles southwest of South Bend, where a party of Sioux had massacred several families, and report to Captain Cox, who, with his company of thirty-day militia, had been stationed there for two weeks with orders to build a blockhouse or log fort for the protection of that extreme border settlement. We started about dark, taking the shortest route by way of Loon and Crystal lakes, over an unbroken prairie the most of the way, aided by the light of the moon until twelve o'clock, when we had to make the last five miles through a drenching rain and so dark we could only keep the road by having a man go on foot with a tallow-candle lantern to lead the way. It was nearly two o'clock in the morning when we reached our destination and were halted by the guard at the blockhouse, which they had finished except the roof. Our coming was a great relief to them. Four persons had been killed by the Indians in sight of the village and their dead bodies brought in.

At ten o'clock that night a Norwegian settler came in from eight miles southwest of Madelia on the south fork of the Watonwan River and reported that four members of his family had been killed and he alone escaped with a wounded arm, and that the Indians were making their way up the river towards where about twenty-five families had returned to their farms within a few days. They were all foreigners and lived in a beautiful valley nearly twenty miles from Madelia. I told

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Captain Cox that it meant sure death to those families unless we went to their protection. He said he could not leave his post without orders. I asked him if he were willing I should take my men and go to their rescue. He consented, but warned me that we might fall into an ambush and be destroyed as the St. Paul company had been at Birch Coolie only two weeks before. I saw that some of his men wanted to go with me, and asked him if he was willing they should, but he said he was there with his company to protect that post and could not consent to have any of his men leave him. We had our rations with us and the cooks of Cox's company made us coffee, and at four o'clock in the morning, after only two hours' rest, we were on our way to save these families. It was so dark I could not tell how many men I had. As soon as it was sufficiently light to see, I rode down the double line to ascertain, and found I had one hundred mounted men and three teams in the rear loaded with armed men. Occasionally a man would tell me he belonged to Cox's company, but was going with me. Those in the wagons were some of them.

Suddenly a thick fog settled down upon us, so that a man could not be seen a rod away. I was riding at the head of the column with two pioneer guides showing us the road, when suddenly a man appeared in the road in our front, who proved to be one of those we were hastening to relieve. He could not speak a word of English, but a part of my men were Norwegians, and we soon learned his name. He had been shot in the breast just at dark the night before, and was holding his straw hat, which had been pierced by two balls, before the wound in his breast. He told us he was sure his wife and two boys had been killed. We learned that we were near the ford of the river where this man lived, and by crossing the river at this ford we could save eight miles in reaching the settlement. But some of the men thought it would be dangerous to go down into the bush at the river bottom where the Indians might be hiding in ambush. The fog had begun to raise, and I told the men that if we reached these families

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ahead of the Indians, we would have to cross this ford, and to follow me and we would cross it safely. When we struck the river bottom the fog was still so dense that we could not see twenty feet ahead of us, but as soon as we reached the high bank on the other side and above the thick fog we could see quite clearly. Here we found the wife of the wounded Norwegian, herself badly wounded and hidden in a thick grove of plum trees near their log house, and told her that her husband was alive, and that they would at once be sent to Madelia.

Leaving ten men to take care of them, we hurried on for the larger settlement, all the way over an open prairie. About eight o'clock we reached the first house in the valley and found it deserted. A kettle of potatoes was boiling over the fire and [there was] no evidence that the Indians had been there. It proved afterwards that they had seen us coming and, believing us to be Indians, had fled and spread the alarm. So it was three hours before we found the entire settlement gathered at one house three miles up the river, badly frightened and expecting the savages upon them at any moment. It was one o'clock before we could get these people with their teams together and with a few household goods started for Madelia. There were twenty-seven wagons in line, and to avoid ambush we took the long route back over the open prairie, making twenty-eight miles, a long, slow march for those teams and people who had only just got back to their homes from the other stampede of over one hundred miles, as well as for the main part of the rest of us who had been in the saddle all night. Late in the afternoon we saw at our left on the opposite side of the river four mounted Indian scouts riding in the same direction with us, who fired their guns and rode out of sight in the timber. This incident gave us some anxiety, and I decided to send a dispatch to Captain Cox in regard to the situation and ask for immediate assistance. The two men with this dispatch returned and met us at nine o'clock that night, and said Captain Cox could not reinforce us as part of his men

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were with us and he was himself in danger of being attacked in the morning, and our best course would be to continue our march and reach Madelia about two o'clock in the morning, which plan was adopted and safely accomplished.[1]

At the trial and execution of the Indians the next December at Mankato for these murders, it was shown that twenty-five Indians took part in these raids and massacres around Madelia, killed seventeen settlers and wounded many more, captured two white women and took them fifty miles and then murdered them, as they had learned that General Sibley's forces were driving their warriors all out of the state and they were very angry. The chief of this party was one of the thirty-eight hung at Mankato on the twenty-sixth day of December, 1862.

We remained at Madelia until we knew these Indians had gone out of the state. Then [we] returned to South Bend. Our thirty days' enlistment had now expired, and Colonel Flandrau had been notified that Colonel Montgomery with the Twenty-fifth Wisconsin Volunteer Regiment would be stationed at South Bend, the militia mustered out, and from then on the Indians would be fought by United States troops under General Pope, with headquarters at Fort Snelling.

About the same time the national government called for a regiment of cavalry to be raised in Minnesota to fight the Indians, and I received a commission to recruit one of the companies. So the next day after my thirty days' commission expired, I took seventy-five men to St. Peter to unite with twenty-five men which a man by the name of Horace Austin had recruited. Being anxious to get our muster rolls to headquarters first of any company and become entitled to the position of company A in the regiment, I waived the position of

[1] For accounts of the Indian raids near Madelia and of conditions existing in the Watonwan Valley, see the *Mankato Semi-weekly Record,* September 27, 1862; *St. Paul Daily Pioneer and Democrat,* September 27, 1862. See also Adjutant General Malmros' report on the organization and disposition of Captain Bierbauer's company, of which Captain Potter was first lieutenant, in Minnesota, *Executive Documents,* 1862, pp. 372, 503, 508.

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captain, to which I was entitled by my number of men, in favor of Austin, who was anxious for it and [who was] a well-educated and brilliant lawyer; and in order not to have any delay, I took the office of first lieutenant. Austin had served as private in the militia, and was captain of our company until the regiment was mustered out; [he was] then elected circuit judge for six years; [and was] afterwards governor of the state for two terms. Thomas F. West was elected second lieutenant. Austin and he have both died within the past three years.

As soon as the company officers were elected, Captain Austin and I took the stage for St. Paul, reaching there the same day, and at once handed in our company muster roll and were told that ours was the first to be put on record. But by some kind of wirepulling and underhand work a Minneapolis company was given letter A, and we had to take up with B company. The horses for the regiment had arrived and were at Fort Snelling. Company A had the first choice of horses and selected bays, and we selected all grays for Company B. The captain returned to St. Peter to look after the men, and I remained to look after the horses, until arrangements could be made to get the horses and equipments to St. Peter. In less than a week we were mustered into the United States service, uniformed, armed, mounted, and ready for orders.

By this time most of the hostile Indians had been driven out of the state into Dakota, and the season was getting too late to follow them up that fall. Many of the outlaws had been captured and were being tried by court-martial at Camp Release, one hundred miles up the river from St. Peter. This court was in session nearly three weeks, and resulted in condemning to death three hundred twenty-one of the Indians implicated in the many murders of the unarmed and defenceless settlers in the state; and [they were] brought to Mankato, chained in twos, confined in the barracks, and guarded by our soldiers until the president could review the proceedings and pass upon the ver-

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dict.[1] But he was not hasty in coming to a decision, and a great majority in the state began to think that the condemned Indians would be set free, as many petitions were being sent to the president from the eastern states for their release, on account of which several attempts were made by the enraged settlers, who had suffered so severely in lives and property, to surprise and kill all of the guilty and condemned Indians. One attempt came near execution. One hundred fifty men, who had lost members of their families by these murders, banded together, were sworn in and armed with revolvers, and officered by some of the best and bravest men in Minnesota, the day and hour fixed for the deed, when one of their own men betrayed the secret to the colonel commanding the regiment guarding the prisoners, who was thus enabled to frustrate the attempt by disarming them and compelling their submission to the law.[2]

About the fifteenth of December President Lincoln's order came to execute thirty-nine of the Indians who were the chiefs and leaders of the parties that massacred the fifteen hundred white men, women, and children in Minnesota in August and September, 1862. The following is a copy of the order:

[1] The incidents of the court-martial begun the latter part of September at Camp Release and continued at Camp Sibley, Lower Agency, by the military commission appointed by General Sibley, were reported in the *St. Paul Daily Pioneer and Democrat,* November 15, 1862, by Isaac V. D. Heard, a prominent attorney of St. Paul, who had joined Sibley's expedition as a member of Captain Joseph Anderson's company of the Cullen Guards and whom Sibley appointed as recorder of the commission. *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars,* 1: 747, 778. Mr. Heard in 1865 brought out his *History of the Sioux War and Massacres of 1862 and 1863* (New York), based very largely on information gained during the trials. Pages 181–190, 231–271 are devoted to the history of the work of the commission.

[2] In a communication addressed to General Elliott, December 6, 1862, General Sibley tells of an attempt on the part of a company of citizens to capture the Indian prisoners from the militia guarding them; two days later in a note to Elliott he expresses a fear that other similar attempts will be made. *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars,* 2: 290, 291. See also Sergeant Ramer's account of attempts to kill the prisoners on the march to Mankato in "Narrative of the Seventh Regiment" in *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars,* 1: 353.

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EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, December 6th, 1862.

BRIGADIER GENERAL H. H. SIBLEY

St Paul Minnesota.

Ordered that of the Indians and Half-breeds sentenced to be hanged by the Military Commission, composed of Colonel Crooks, Lt. Colonel Marshall, Captain Grant, Captain Bailey, and Lieutenant Olin, and lately sitting in Minnesota, you cause to be executed on Friday the nineteenth day of December, instant, the following named, towit

[*Here follow the names of thirty-nine Indians*]

The other condemned prisoners you will hold subject to further orders, taking care that they neither escape, nor are subjected to any unlawful violence.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN,
President of the United States.[1]

On the morning of December 26th our company was ordered to march to Mankato to act as guard at the execution of the Indians. We were in our saddles and on the way before daylight. The distance was twelve miles. The thermometer registered thirty-five degrees below zero, and when we reached Mankato, many of the men had frozen ears and feet, and suffered severely from the intense cold.

At Mankato we met for the first time several other companies of our regiment, who had been ordered there to guard the Indian prisoners from violence while the thirty-nine were being executed. Hundreds of angry men from all over the state, who had suffered from the hands of these savages, were camped in sight of town, well armed and determined that the two hundred eighty-two Indians who were not to be executed that day by the law should suffer death by their hands.

Colonel Miller, who was in command of the troops, had a force of [a] full thousand men, including one battery of artil-

[1] Corrected to conform with the original letter now in the manuscript collection of the Minnesota Historical Society. A telegraphic dispatch from President Lincoln, dated December 16, postponed the execution to the twenty-sixth of December. *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars*, 2: 292.

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lery. The execution took place early in the afternoon. All of the thirty-nine Indians were ranged on one platform to be executed at the same moment in sight of a vast multitude of people, besides the two thousand troops. At the appointed time W. H. Dooley, the former chief of scouts, whose family had been killed by the Indians at Lake Shetek, stepped forward, and with an ax cut the two-inch rope that held the scaffolding suspended, and dropped the entire number in the tight grasp of death. Ten days before their death they had been taken from the barracks and put in a stone building near and in plain sight of where the gallows was being built. Missionaries who had formerly been with them for years were permitted with them during these ten days. When the time came for them to go onto the gallows, they had asked to have the chains taken from their legs so they could go on in Indian style, single file. This they did, singing an Indian war song, joined in by all the other prisoners. Then each Indian placed the rope around his own neck and sang while the caps were being drawn down over their eyes. For five minutes after the scaffold fell everything was as hushed and silent as death itself. Then the crowd began quietly to disperse.[1]

Many settlers, however, had formed into companies, prepared to make an attack on the barracks. Colonel Miller, however, had his forces well disposed to repel any attack that might be made; but with his disciplined force of well-armed men to

[1] For a full report of the execution and of the events immediately preceding, see the *Mankato Weekly Record, Supplement,* December 26, 1862. The account as given in this supplement was reprinted in the *Mankato Daily Review,* December 26, 1896, and later, with additional material, was issued in pamphlet form under the title *Execution of Thirty-eight Sioux Indians at Mankato, Minnesota, December 26, 1862* (Mankato, 1896. 8 p.). Other accounts by eye witnesses are: Father A. Ravoux, *Reminiscences, Memoirs, and Lectures,* 78–81 (St. Paul, 1890); Riggs, *Mary and I,* 179–185; Daniel Buck, *Indian Outbreaks,* 251–271 (Mankato, 1904); *St. Paul Daily Pioneer and Democrat,* December 28, 1862. Captain Potter in his account fails to note that, by an order of the president received on the evening of the 24th, the execution of Ta-tay-me-ma, one of the condemned prisoners, was postponed. *Mankato Weekly Record, Supplement,* December 26, 1862.

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meet, the people and their leaders saw it would be a reckless attempt, and most of them left at once for their homes bitterly disappointed at the failure. As nearly all the soldiers present were Minnesota men, and many of them had had friends killed by the Indians, it was quite well understood among them that if an attack was made on the barracks and they were ordered to fire, they would do so, but so that none of the attacking party would get hurt.

The Indians were ordered to be buried on an island in the river near where they were executed and all in one grave, and a strong guard was placed to protect their remains. That night our company was returned to St. Peter. On the way several sleighs passed us at different times with only two men in each sleigh. The surgeon of our regiment, Dr. Weiser, was with us, and said to me that it looked as if those sleighs might have dead Indians in them in spite of the guard at the grave. I replied by assuring him that if there were Indians in those sleighs and they were dead, there was no danger from them of his losing his scalp. After reaching St. Peter and having supper at the Nicolet Hotel, the doctor invited me upstairs to the third floor, saying he had some valuable Indian relics he would like to show me. On entering the rooms, there lay three of the Indians that had been buried that afternoon and placed under a strong guard of a full company of live Minnesota soldiers. And the great mystery was how these Indians got out of there under the very eyes and in spite of the watchfulness of those guards. And it was soon afterwards known that they had all escaped the guard and the grave and that some of them had gone to Europe.[1] And that was all the punishment the settlers

[1] According to a contemporary newspaper account physicians from different parts of the state were present at the execution with the avowed intention of procuring the bodies of the condemned prisoners for scientific purposes. Orders were even received from doctors outside the state, a Chicago surgeon sending in a request for several, for which he agreed to pay ten dollars each. The writer of the article asserted that at the time of writing there remained in the grave very few, if any, of the bodies. *Mankato Weekly Record,* January 3, 1863. See also Buck, *Indian Outbreaks,* 370.

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of Minnesota got out of the Indians for the fifteen hundred lives lost and property destroyed, in any direct way by themselves or the government.

About the first of March, 1863, four companies of our regiment were ordered to Fort Ridgely and thoroughly drilled all that month in preparation for the expedition planned by General Pope to enter Dakota early in the spring to capture and punish the hostile Indians who had escaped there during the previous fall. The winter had been very severe on them, and many had died from cold and hunger. Yet during the month of April several war parties had returned to Minnesota and commenced their destructive work again, and our battalion had plenty to do to protect the settlements. One party of fifteen passed within three miles of Fort Ridgely and killed several people near New Ulm. Our entire battalion was ordered out by companies in different directions to capture them. Captain Austin having been ordered on court-martial duty, I was ordered to take the company and strike the Cottonwood River near Sleepy Lake. We soon saw the Indians on the opposite side of the river making west hurriedly, leading horses they had stolen that morning from some of the settlers. They evidently had seen us, but we gained on them rapidly, and they abandoned their stolen horses and scattered in different directions, each by himself. We had with us four half-breed scouts besides W. H. Dooley and his brother-in-law, Smith, formerly especially mentioned in the siege of New Ulm, all of whom said that these Indians would make for a certain point where they could meet that night, and if we could make it before they did, we could stand some chance of capturing them. We decided to reach Walnut Grove that night, a distance of twenty miles, where we would find hay for our horses and some log houses in which we could [secure] shelter and rest for the night. We got there about midnight, fed our horses, and made coffee. Orders were given to be ready to start at daylight for Lake Shetek, fifteen miles away. Six miles brought us to the location where Dooley's and Smith's

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families were overtaken and murdered the previous August. They had not been there since they made their escape. The ground was swampy and covered with water, making it useless to search for the bodies. At nine o'clock we came to Dooley's and Smith's homes at the south end of the lake, and found their hay and grain had all been used by troops that had gone through there in the fall. Here we divided our force and sent twenty men under W. H. Dooley up the east side of the lake, seven miles to the Ireland farm at the north end of the lake, where they were to secrete themselves and watch for the Indians; while the rest of us returned to the south end of the lake [and] crossed the Des Moines River, then high and full of floating ice, where we came near losing three men and horses in the heavy current and floes of ice. After crossing, we found stacks of hay, and two log houses whose occupants had been killed by the Indians. We made fires and dried our clothes and fed our horses, then divided the company again, leaving ten men having the poorest horses to remain until five o'clock, then go up the west side of the lake; while I took thirty men and went to the Great Oasis ten miles west near the Pipestone, a place of great resort for the Indians of the Northwest, where they obtained their soft red stone, out of which they made their pipes. Orders were to all meet at Ireland's farm that night, where we all camped together.

We were now over sixty miles from Fort Ridgely and concluded to return by way of Redwood River agency, a distance of eighty miles, but enabling us to obtain forage and rations at the agency and also find some game, the half-breeds told us, in the timber along the Redwood River. We started early, our route taking us over an open prairie. A few men were sent out as scouts on each flank with the double object of finding the trail of hostile Indians, if possible, or running onto some game that would be very welcome to the sixty men, who had been living two days on dry bread and coffee. All were to meet at Linn's crossing on the Redwood, twenty miles from our starting point. When nearing the Redwood, the party on

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the east flank saw five mounted Indians making north at a rapid pace, and at once gave chase. The Indians crossed the river at Linn's ford, and our main force came up just in time to see them pass out of sight on the opposite side of the river. Twenty of us with good horses crossed and followed them up rapidly until we came in sight of them, when they separated and scattered in different directions, and we returned to the ford, where the rest of the company had arrived. Our hunting parties had gotten quite a variety of game during the forenoon, such as prairie wolves, foxes, badgers, skunks, and wild geese, which was dressed and being cooked in various ways when our party got to camp, and afforded us a fine relish with our bread and coffee.

By riding twenty miles that afternoon, we would be able to reach Fort Ridgely the next day. We went into camp on the south bank of the river under very unpleasant conditions. It was [a] cold, dark April night. We had but one full ration of bread and took our supper on a half ration with our coffee. The horses had only dry grass with a little corn. It was so cold the men could not sleep, and, sleepy and hungry, they were not in very good humor. It was twenty miles to Redwood Falls, and on consultation it was unanimously decided to push on for that place during the night. We started on about midnight. As we were in a part of the country never settled by white men, there was nothing to guide us but narrow and almost indistinguishable Indian trails, and often our half-breed guides would have to dismount in the darkness and feel for the way on their hands and knees, making slow progress. Not even the glimmer of a single star broke the gloom of the night. We rode four abreast, many of the men asleep on their horses. One sick man, Sergeant Jones, fell from his horse twice and had to be helped back. But we made that twenty miles in eight hours. The place was deserted, but we found plenty of hay, and about five bushels of corn on the ear, and shelter, using the logs of some of the Indian camps for wood to warm and cook with. The corn was divided with the men and horses,

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the men roasting theirs by the log fires and enjoying the eating of it.

We stayed here until noon, then mounted, and reached Fort Ridgely at evening without capturing an Indian or losing a man. The other companies sent out at the same time in other directions returned the same night or next day, except one which was ordered up the Minnesota River to Big Stone Lake, taking six days' rations, returning the sixth day with one Indian, who claimed to be a friend of the whites and had voluntarily surrendered himself. Two days afterwards I was detailed to take this Indian to Fort Snelling and deliver him to General Pope, David Quinn, a half-breed government interpreter, accompanying me. Quinn was quite certain that this Indian was one of the outlaws engaged in the last raid. We took him, shackled, in a two-horse wagon to St. Peter and placed him in the county jail overnight, and next day by stage to Fort Snelling. After delivering the prisoner to General Pope, we went on to St. Paul. The interpreter Quinn followed up an investigation of this Indian until he obtained positive evidence that he was engaged in the massacres. He was tried, proved guilty, and hung in the fall of 1863 at Fort Snelling.

I was now expecting my wife and two small children back from Michigan as soon as navigation opened on the river. Boats had already come up as far as St. Paul, and the next one brought my family on their return to our home in Garden City. I went to General Sibley and obtained a furlough for one week to go with them and see them comfortably settled again in our former home. The next day after their arrival at St. Paul we took passage on one of the first boats up the Minnesota River that spring to Mankato, and obtained conveyance from there to Garden City. We found that most of the people had returned to their homes. Two companies of troops had been stationed there early in the winter and had built good log barracks, which gave the citizens a feeling of confidence and safety. In four days I had everything com-

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fortably arranged for my family, returned to Mankato, and took a boat up the river, landing safely at Fort Ridgely.

We then had a busy time getting ready for the summer campaign against the Indians in Dakota. A large amount of supplies were being shipped up the river by boat to Camp Pope, which was to be the rendezvous and starting-point of the expedition, the entire force of which was to be composed of Minnesota troops, consisting of three regiments of infantry, one of cavalry, two batteries of light artillery, two companies of half-breed scouts, and one company of pioneers, in all some over three thousand men. On account of the wild and unsettled country the expedition had to depend on its own supplies, and was accompanied by one hundred twenty-five six-mule wagons and a pontoon train of forty six-mule teams, to cross the Missouri and other rivers if necessary.

This expedition moved from Camp Pope June 16th, 1863.[1] Our course was northwest, keeping in the valley of the Minnesota River, crossing many small tributaries, and making from fifteen to twenty miles a day. The scouts were kept busy in advance and on both flanks, with orders to report at once if

[1] A diary of the movements of the expedition, written by Stephen R. Riggs, who accompanied General Sibley as interpreter, appeared at intervals in the *St. Paul Daily Press,* June 14–September 6, 1863; Colonel William R. Marshall contributed an account of the battles of Big Mound, Buffalo Lake, and Stony Lake to the *St. Paul Daily Press,* August 15, 1863; and the official reports of General Sibley, Colonels Crooks and Baker, and Colonels Marshall and McPhail appeared in the same paper September 26, 27, and 30, 1863. Among other accounts, written by members of the expedition, may be noted the following: *A Journal of Sibley's Indian Expedition during the Summer of 1863 and Record of the Troops Employed* (Winona, Minnesota, 1864. 52 p.), by Arthur M. Daniels, of Company H, Sixth Infantry; *The Expedition against the Sioux Indians in 1863 under Gen. Henry H. Sibley* (St. Cloud, Minnesota, 1895. 22 p.), by Loren W. Collins, of Company F, Seventh Infantry; *A Thrilling Narrative of the Minnesota Massacre and the Sioux War of 1862–63,* pp. 199–255 (Chicago, c. 1896), by Alonzo P. Connolly, of Company A, Sixth Infantry; *Recollections of the Sioux Massacre, together with a Historical Sketch of the Sibley Expedition of 1863,* pp. 237–282 (Lake City, Minnesota, 1909), by Oscar G. Wall, of Company F, First Regiment Mounted Rangers; *History of*

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any hostile Indians should be seen within ten miles of us. The pioneers located our camps and constructed earthworks every night. Ten days brought us to Big Stone Lake near the eastern line of Dakota, where we camped one day in Brown's Valley on the headwaters of the Minnesota River, flowing southeast into the Mississippi, and the Red River of the North, flowing north into the Hudson Bay, both rivers having their origin in two large lakes; the valley, which is two miles wide and five miles long, running between the two lakes and shedding waters into each in opposite directions in the nature of a divide. From here our march continued northwest to reach the big bend of the Sheyenne River, over one hundred miles away. After marching about fifty miles, the scouts reported that the grasshoppers had destroyed all the grass in advance of us, compelling us to halt and go into camp for one day, while the extent of the destitution of grass was ascertained. It was discovered that it extended about twenty miles, and the next day we crossed that barren prairie where not a spear of grass was to be seen, reaching the big bend of the Sheyenne River on the third day of July, crossing that river and making our camp in a beautiful valley, where we remained until a detachment could be sent to Fort Abercrombie, sixty miles northeast on Red River, to get any news from General Pope and also the mail for our command.

General Sibley's adjutant general came to me and said the general wanted to see me immediately. On going to his headquarters, I was asked to take command of one hundred or more men he would detail to go to Fort Abercrombie and return, giving three days for the trip, and [he] informed me that

Company E of the Sixth Minnesota Regiment of Volunteer Infantry, 18–21 (St. Paul, 1899), written by Alfred J. Hill in 1869; "Narrative of the Sixth Regiment" by Charles W. Johnson, of Company D, "Narrative of the Seventh Regiment" by James T. Ramer, of Company B, "Narrative of the Tenth Regiment" by General James H. Baker, "Narrative of the First Regiment of Mounted Rangers" by Eugene M. Wilson, of Company A, in *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars,* 1: 315, 352–355, 457–461, 520–523.

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he considered it a dangerous duty and would give me five hundred men if I wished them. I replied that if he would furnish me with sixty men from my own company, forty from any other company he might select, and fifty half-breed scouts under command of Captain Dooley, I would undertake the service. As the days were hot, he thought I had better start by twelve that night. I told him to make out his orders and detail, and I would be ready. I returned to my company, stated my orders to the captain, called the men into line, and asked if sixty of them would volunteer to go with me or should I make a detail. Every man offered to go.

At midnight we were in our saddles ready for the start. The scouts told us we would find water halfway, but I told them we would halt the column as we crossed the river so that every one could fill his canteen, as we were to pass through an enemy's country and might get delayed before getting halfway and had better be prepared for it now. The night was warm and clear, the moon just rising, and we made good progress, and at daylight we were twenty miles from our camp. Before leaving, General Sibley's orders were read to us to keep scouts out in front and in [the] rear and on both flanks, and to kill no game coming or going. Two sutlers' wagons, drawn by ten mules each, accompanied us, to be loaded with supplies at the fort. When daylight came, a dense fog settled down upon us, which detained us over two hours. When it lifted, we saw within close gunshot of us six fine elk standing and looking directly at us. It was a severe test to the self-restraint and military discipline of our men and the authority of orders given by the commanding general, all of which they were powerfully tempted to disregard. Some of them looked at me as if to ask if I wanted elk for dinner. I simply shook my head and not a gun was fired, but how the spirit and appetite did rebel against the orders!

The sun soon came out bright, and we were soon on our way again. It became very hot, but our scouts were all out watching and looking for any fresh signs of Indians. Coming in

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sight of some scattering timber just as we were entering a valley from the upland, where we were told water would be found, a herd of buffaloes that had been started up by the scouts came rushing down a ravine near the sutlers' wagons, which were in advance of us. The sutlers, who had probably not heard the orders read or did not think themselves under strict military discipline like the soldiers, fired into them, killing one and breaking the leg of another. And before we fairly knew what was up or could interfere, many of the men were in the chase of them. Corporal Dudley of my company, in his excitement after a large wounded bull that had turned on his enemies, in using his revolver shot his own horse in the top of the head and he fell as if dead. Seeing the danger of the fallen corporal from the enraged animal and being near at hand, to save his life I shot the buffalo in the head with my Sharp's carbine. The supposed dead horse recovered and proved to have received only a scalp wound, and he rode that same horse until mustered out.

This episode and dressing the game detained us another hour, and when we reached the stream where we expected water, there was none there and none short of Wolfe Creek, twenty-five miles further on. The sun was very hot, and [the] men and horses [were] thirsty. The scouts reported finding a fresh Indian trail where they had camped the day before, and Captain Dooley of the scouts became very uneasy in view of the situation. About noon we crossed another Indian trail, both of which led north in the direction of the Canadian line. Later we learned that these Indians had started out for Minnesota to renew their depredations on the settlers of that state, but on reaching Lake Traverse, a few miles north of Big Stone Lake, on the approach of General Sibley's expedition, they returned to near the Canadian line, where all the hostile Indians of Minnesota were then assembled, so that, if attacked by our forces and overpowered, they could take refuge in Canadian territory, where our forces would not be permitted to follow

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them. They also would obtain reinforcements from the several tribes located there. By making this trail north and then moving to the northwest by way of Devil's Lake to the Missouri River, they thought to deceive General Sibley with the belief that they had escaped into Canada; and by the time he found out his mistake in following them, as he supposed, to the border, the season would be too late for him to pursue them further. But their strategy did not succeed, as Sibley learned of their intentions and overtook them before reaching the Missouri.

After we struck this trail we moved cautiously and about four o'clock reached Goose Creek Valley, and within another hour found abundance of water to relieve the sufferings of the men and animals, some of whom had parched and swollen tongues from thirst.

Major Camp, in command of Fort Abercrombie, had been notified of our coming, and, as soon as he caught sight of us approaching, started at once with fifty cavalrymen to meet us and escort us to the fort, where we were well provided for after our sixty miles' ride during the extreme heat and thirst to celebrate the Fourth of July.

We had brought with us a six-mule wagon for the purpose of taking back the mail received for the men of our expedition, which the major showed us all ready to be loaded. I informed him my orders were to stay one day at the fort and return the next. So on the fifth we rested. The horse doctor of the post informed me that five of our horses were unfit to return, and the post surgeon told me that three of our men would not be able to go back with us.

On the morning of the sixth everything was ready for us to start on our return at two o'clock in the morning. Major Camp with one hundred men was to return with us. Without any incident of note we reached our camp the next evening just at dark, delivered the large mail at headquarters, made a

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verbal report—not including our buffalo hunt—and [I] received the thanks of the general for the success of my service.[1]

The next morning the expedition again took up its line of march up the valley of the Sheyenne River, until the seventeenth, when the general learned of the movement of the Indians from the border of Canada southwest towards the Missouri River, this move being confirmed on the twentieth of July by three hundred half-breed Chippewas visiting our camp, who were out on their summer hunt to get their winter's supply of buffalo meat and skins for clothing.

This information necessitated a change in our plans. About fifty miles south of Devil's Lake General Sibley established a camp, had it fortified, and left there a large portion of his wagon train, all sick or broken-down men and animals, with a sufficient guard and twenty days' rations, and in light marching order took with him eighteen hundred infantry, six hundred cavalry, one hundred pioneers, one hundred scouts, [and] two batteries of artillery, and started on a rapid march to intercept the Indians before they reached the Missouri River. On the twenty-second we crossed the James River fifty miles west. On the twenty-fourth the scouts reported hostile Indians in large numbers near Big Mound, about sixty miles north of the Missouri River, and two celebrated chiefs, Red Plume and Standing Buffalo, with them.

[1] Mr. Daniels in his *Journal* says that a detachment under the command of Colonel Averill, of which he was a member, was dispatched for supplies to Fort Abercrombie from the camp near Lakes Big Stone and Traverse on June 30, and that it left the fort on July 6, rejoining the main column on the Sheyenne River on the 9th (p. 6). The other authorities cited in note 1, page 475, agree substantially with Daniels. Neither they nor Daniels make any mention of the sending of another detachment to Fort Abercrombie from the camp on the Sheyenne, which, according to Captain Potter, must have set out while Colonel Averill's command was still at the fort. The two detachments left Fort Abercrombie on the same day (July 6), that under the command of Captain Potter arriving at the camp two days in advance of the other. Captain Potter says nothing of Averill's expedition.

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Positive orders had been issued that there must be no killing of game, but Lieutenant Freeman of my regiment and some of his friends found the temptation too great and, while outside our lines hunting buffalo, were ambushed, and he and three others killed. A sergeant escaped with two arrows in his body and his horse mortally wounded and reported to the general.[1] In a short time the scouts reported that the main body of the Indians were within five miles of us. We went into camp near the east bank of a large lake just west of the Big Mound. Earthworks were thrown up while the Reverends Riggs and Williamson, missionaries to the Indians, were sent to treat with them. Large bodies of Indians appearing in plain sight near the top of Big Mound, Dr. Weiser, surgeon of our regiment, who had been with the Indians several years, mounted his horse and rode to where these painted warriors were. He greeted and shook hands with many he knew and returned. As he rode down our lines Colonel McPhail said to him, "Doctor, I expected to see you killed while you were up there." He replied, "They will not kill a medicine man. They are my best friends." He further said that there would be no fight that day as the Indians said they would surrender.

Nine companies of our men had now been sitting for three hours on horses drawn up in the hot sun in the line of battle waiting for orders. Riggs and Williamson returned, bringing with them two white boys the Indians had taken in Minnesota the year before, and a request for General Sibley to meet them in council. Dr. Weiser was so confident of the peaceful intentions of the Indians that he again mounted his horse to visit them. He had no authority to do this, and our colonel and others tried to dissuade him, reminding him of their treachery and the possibility of his losing his scalp. But he would not

[1] Among those accompanying Lieutenant Freeman on his hunting excursion was George A. Brackett, whose report of their encounter with the Indians and of the death of Freeman appeared in the *St. Paul Daily Press,* August 13, 1863. He later wrote a narrative describing these experiences, which was published under the title *A Winter Evening's Tale* (New York, 1880. 31 p.).

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listen to advice and off he went up the hill in full uniform and on a gallop; but before he reached them he was pierced with many balls and fell dead from his horse, which turned to come back, but also fell dead. His orderly, who was with him, returned unharmed. This started the battle immediately. With their war whoops and yells the Indians spread out and advanced, some on horses, others on foot. Colonel McPhail immediately ordered our nine companies of cavalry forward. Colonel Crooks, with the Sixth Minnesota Infantry, on the double quick, made for the left flank of the Indians to cut them off from their camp. Both batteries rapidly followed the infantry and cavalry. The Indians were seen on the run and we after them. On reaching the top of the hill, we found ourselves in the midst of a heavy thunderstorm in addition to the fight. As our regiment charged down the opposite side of Big Mound, with Indians firing at us from front and right flank, Private Murphy and his horse at my left fell dead. As Colonel McPhail, with his sword drawn, was urging and directing our men to cut these Indians we were fighting off from their main body on our right, his sword fell from his hand; [at the same time] my horse fell to the ground but was soon on his feet again, staggered for a moment, and then went forward in the charge as if nothing had occurred, although I thought he was shot. But afterwards, when Murphy's body was found and examined, it was found that lightning had killed him and his horse, disarmed the colonel, and knocked down my horse. But on we went as fast as our horses could take us until we came to their camp, which we found abandoned, leaving several tons of buffalo meat and other heavy materials that in their hasty flight they could not take with them. Colonel Crooks's infantry and the batteries soon came up, the camp and materials [were] set on fire, and we followed their trail leading directly towards the Missouri River, soon overhauling them. It now became a running fight for the protection and safety of their families as well as themselves. One of Sibley's aides came to us with orders to return to headquarters, but our colonel did

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not understand it to return immediately, and we all pushed on after the Indians. They turned upon us again in their desperation and were quickly put to flight, and in the last five miles of the running fight, before darkness overtook us, they were forced to abandon nearly everything they had taken the summer previous from the Minnesota settlers, as well as the valuable furs and buffalo robes they had gotten since being driven from their reservations the previous fall. Many of our soldiers found mink, otter, and beaver skins, and it was reported that a sutler had a wagon-load of these furs when he got back to St. Paul.

As it was getting dark another aide came up with an order for us to return to headquarters immediately. We were now eighteen miles from there and consequently, after the severe service and excitement of the day, we had a long and very trying march back that night, arriving at headquarters just at daylight, thoroughly worn out and feeling as if Sibley ought to have brought his headquarters to us with his whole force and camped with us near the Indians, rendering it possible for us to capture them before reaching the Missouri. The next day we laid over to bury our dead, two officers and seven men. The dead Indians numbered over one hundred.

When we overtook them again, they were within twenty miles of the Missouri River, where they gave us battle again with increased numbers at a place called Stony Lake. The whole country in our front seemed filled with Indians on ponies. We halted, and in a few moments our artillery were sending shells bursting among them, soon putting them to flight again, as they can not stand before the fire of artillery and the bursting of shells beyond the reach of any fire from them. Consequently this fight did not last more than thirty minutes, and, occurring in the morning, by nine o'clock we reached a point where we could look over the broad valley of the upper Missouri River. It was a very beautiful day, the sun shining bright and clear, so that we could quite distinctly see on the opposite high ground across the river, fifteen miles away, bright flashes of light reflected to us, which at first were thought to be the glimmer

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of the bright sabers of General Sully's command, which it had been planned to send up the south side of the Missouri as a part of the campaign to capture those Indians. But Sibley's scouts told him that those flashes of light were from small oval looking-glasses the Indian warriors were proud of wearing, both for ornament and to signal with, and could be seen favorably for twenty-five miles; and the signals we saw were from Indians who had crossed the river and were sending a defiant challenge for us to follow them to the other side if we dared. General Sibley had relied upon capturing the families of the Indians before they could cross the river, and believed that then the Indians would come and surrender. But his half-breed scouts told him that the Indians would quickly make rafts of willows overlaid with buffalo skins and take their women and children over and escape capture. Seeing a large body of Indians making for the timber which skirted the river, we marched rapidly to reach them. Just as we were entering the river bottom, the scouts brought in several Teton Sioux they had just captured, who belonged on the other side of the river, and who said that a large body of their tribe had come to assist their brothers in crossing the river, and that they had seen nothing of General Sully's white soldiers.

When we reached the river near the mouth of Apple Creek, five miles below the present city of Bismarck, the capital of North Dakota, the Indians had all passed into the timber out of our sight. The pioneers were ordered to cut a road as soon as possible for the artillery, which was hurried to the bank of the river. The Indians and their families could now be seen on the opposite side, and a few shells from the cannon quickly drove them from our sight again. Convinced that the families of the Indians had escaped him, General Sibley sent his favorite aide, Lieutenant Beaver, to order the artillery to return, but, before reaching them, he and his orderly were killed by Indians secreted in the timber. A second aide reached the battery and they returned, and we all went into camp about dark on a level elevation or mound, with Apple Creek on one

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side, lined with a thick growth of willow brush, and a heavy body of timber on another side, the mound from ten to twenty feet higher than the bottom which the creek willows grew on, with a steep bank, and covering several acres, with good grass for our animals. Strong earthworks were thrown up and a heavy guard placed.

Just at daybreak several shots were fired from the timber into our camp, four of which passed through our company officers' tent, too high to do damage, and my horse was hit in one leg, disabling him for service for several weeks. A small party of Indians also made their appearance from the brush along Apple Creek, who tried to stampede our horses, but a few shells from our battery into the timber and brush stopped all that trouble.

After the Indians had escaped us by crossing the river, and learning nothing of the whereabouts of Sully's army, Sibley sent his Indian scouts down the river to learn something about them, if possible. They returned the second day with the information that Sully's supply boats were grounded on a sandbar one hundred miles below. While the scouts were out on this duty, we buried Lieutenant Beaver and his orderly with military honors. Beaver was a young man of English birth, who had seen much experience in Africa hunting large game, and, with two other young Englishmen, had come to St. Paul for the purpose of spending one season hunting large game on the plains and in the mountains of this country, and had brought their fine hunting horses with them. But finding it would not be advisable or safe to carry out their plans while the Indians were at war with us, [they] offered their services to General Sibley for his expedition. They were given lieutenants' commissions and served on his staff as volunteer aides without pay. They were well educated and, it was understood, belonged to high-bred families. As Lieutenant Beaver was the oldest of the three, he claimed the honor of carrying dispatches in cases of the greatest danger; and thus after three months' faithful and courageous service, [he] had laid down

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his life on the banks of the upper Missouri River, at the hands of treacherous Indians, five hundred miles west of civilization at that day. His two friends sadly and keenly felt his loss and resolved to avenge his death by continuing to fight the Indians, and afterwards both of them lost their lives on our frontier before the Indian war closed.

On the third day, coöperation in the campaign with General Sully having proved a failure, General Sibley ordered a return to Fort Snelling. It took us four days to reach Atchison, where we had left our supplies and a part of our force. On reaching there, we learned that our scouts, who had been left at Camp Atchison during our absence, had made an important capture in the person of a son of Little Crow, the malignant Sioux chief mainly responsible for bringing on this Indian war. His influence was so great that he persuaded the Indians to believe they could drive all of the settlers out of the country west of the Mississippi River before snowfall if they would follow him. Instead, within that time they found themselves, after hard fighting, driven away from their reservations and homes out of the state into the bleak plains of Dakota, where they suffered and many of them starved the next winter as the result of their following Little Crow into a war with the whites. Then Little Crow's followers turned against him, saying he had deceived them and he could lead them no longer nor live among them, and [it] would be safer [for him] to go and live in the white man's country than to stay among them. So he left them and took his son and returned to Minnesota, where he was seen by a settler who knew him, and was shot and killed about the first of July. His son escaped and fled into Dakota again, where he was captured by our scouts near Devil's Lake about the last of July while in search of his mother's family, who had been driven with the other Indians across the Missouri River.[1] The son was taken to General

[1] The death of Little Crow took place near Hutchinson. A letter from that place under date of July 6, 1863, and signed J. W. M., describing the killing in detail, appeared in the *St. Paul Daily Press,*

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Pope's headquarters at Fort Snelling, where valuable information was obtained from him, after which he was taken to Rock Island and imprisoned with the other Indians who had been condemned by the court-martial to be executed but [were] reprieved by the president, until they were all liberated and taken up the Missouri River and turned loose in Montana; and in June, 1876, the most of them were in the battle of Little Big Horn River, aiding in the massacre of the gallant Custer and his five companies of cavalry. It was believed then and [is] still believed by the old settlers in Minnesota that if those Indians, condemned to death by court-martial, had all been executed, the battle and massacre on the Little Big Horn would never have occurred, as their bitter enmity and spirit of revenge and influence would not have been brought to bear in causing it nor their assistance in aiding it.

The day before we reached Camp Atchison an organization of men numbering one hundred, well mounted and well armed with two pieces of artillery under command of a Captain Fisk, camped there over night on their way to the new gold fields just discovered in Montana. Major Atchison in command of the camp and other officers tried to dissuade them from going on, as they would surely be attacked by the Indians and might all lose their lives. But they felt confident that there would be no trouble, as they were well mounted and armed and could protect themselves and their train of supplies and outfits until they reached Fort Benton at the great north bend of the Missouri River, where there was a small garrison of United States troops. So they moved on. However, when [they were] about fifty miles from Camp Atchison, early one morning the Indians attacked them before they had broken camp, killing four of them at their first fire, but with their artillery they kept

July 10, 1863. The story of the capture of Little Crow's son is related in a dispatch from Major Cook to Colonel Miller, dated August 2, 1863, which appeared in the *Press* of August 13, 1863. Colonel Miller included in his report the son's account of his father's death. See also August 6 and 15 issues of the *Press* for further details.

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the Indians off all day and at night sent two of their best men and horses with a most urgent dispatch back to Camp Atchison for assistance. These couriers reached the camp just at daybreak, and General Sibley, who had reached there with our army only the day before, soon had a force of four hundred men and one battery on the way for their relief, which reached them at twelve o'clock at night. The next morning about two hundred Indians came in sight to reconnoitre and possibly make another attack. Before they fairly knew what was up, our four hundred mounted troops were after them and the battery was pouring shells among them. This quickly sent them scattering over the plains as fast as their ponies could carry them out of the reach of their morning surprise and hot reception. Our cavalry soon returned from the scattered chase and reported five Indians killed by the shells fired. Thus delivered, Fisk and his men were willing to return with us, and acknowledged that but for the relief so promptly given them they would have all been slaughtered. Fisk and his men were soon leading the way back to our camp, and this expedition of fifty miles and back for their deliverance was accomplished within less than forty hours without the loss of a man.[1]

The next morning Camp Atchison was broken up. General Sibley with the infantry and one battery marched by way of the Sheyenne River and Fort Abercrombie; and Colonel McPhail with six companies of cavalry and the other battery

[1] None of the accounts of the Sibley expedition cited in note 1, page 475, makes any mention of the dispatching of a detachment in answer to a call from Captain Fisk for assistance. This detachment, according to Captain Potter, was sent out on the day following the return of the main body of Sibley's command to Camp Atchison. Mr. Daniels, however, in the entry for that day, August 11, in his *Journal,* notes that "Capt. Fiske's expedition . . . passed here [Camp Atchison] while we were out towards the Missouri," which does not agree with Captain Potter's statement that Fisk and his party were encamped near Camp Atchison on August 9. Captain Fisk also in his report to Adjutant General Thomas, dated St. Paul, Minnesota, January 28, 1864, entitled *Expedition of Captain Fisk to the Rocky Mountains* (38 Congress, 1 session, *House Executive Documents,* vol. 9, no. 45—serial

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took an easterly route running south of Big Stone Lake to Fort Ridgely. No signs of Indians anywhere appeared.

I had with my company of cavalry when it first started out a young man by the name of Moore. He was six feet two inches in height. His home was in Blue Earth Valley south of my home in Garden City. He was with us in our first fight at Big Mound, during which three Indians hid in a buffalo wallow on a hill at our right, from which they were firing down on us. Our colonel gave orders to Captain Austin to deploy to the right under protection of the hill and cut them off if possible and drive them from their position. Within two minutes we were in their rear. They fired at us and then ran to try to escape. Two of them were killed, and the other one threw down his gun and offered to surrender, but some of the men fired at him and wounded him. He instantly turned and ran for his gun and before any one could shoot him, he fired, the ball striking Andrew Moore in the bowels, who at once knew from the nature of his wound that he could not recover. We carried him in an ambulance with us to the Missouri River, but, being on the move and with no proper treatment, he died on the twenty-fifth. We buried him with military honors on the bank of a very beautiful lake, marked his grave by a large mound of stones piled over it, and gave the lake the name of Moore's Lake. The most pathetic feature of the case was that, while he knew he could not live, he hoped and longed to be able to reach his home and look his wife and two children once more in the face before he died. Ten years after that this valley was well

1189), says that he camped near Camp Atchison July 21, that the officers at the camp expressed fears for the safety of his party on account of the Indians, but that he resumed his journey on July 23. He, too, makes no mention of having trouble or of sending back for assistance (p. 6). Writing to General Thomas from Camp Grant, near Head of Mouse River, July 31, 1863, he says: "We are almost through the hostile Sioux country, and I think there is now little to apprehend for the expedition (p. 9)." By August 11 the Fisk party was well out toward the Dakota-Montana line, only a short distance south of the international boundary (p. 15).

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settled and a railroad ran along the bank of this lake, which up to that time had been known as Moore's Lake.

Colonel McPhail was a Minnesota farmer and knew but little of military tactics or discipline, and, knowing he would meet no hostile Indians, gave us an easy time on our home march. Buffaloes were plenty, and hunting parties were sent out every day, bringing in an abundance of fresh meat for the entire command soon after we reached Minnesota. We arrived at Fort Ridgely about the tenth of September. During our absence General Pope had two lines of stockades constructed, reaching from the north line of Iowa to the border of Canada. They were from ten to twenty miles apart, depending upon convenience to food and water, and constructed of prairie sod, with stables for horses as well as accommodations for men. The first line of stockades ran on a parallel with New Ulm, the other from ten to twenty miles west and parallel with it. A small force of cavalry was stationed at each of these stockades to coöperate in capturing or killing any bands of Indians that might come within these lines, practically covering the entire settled portion of the state. This proved of great benefit, as the Indians soon learned that it would be capture or death for them to venture within range of these lines to devastate settlements. As our regiment by the terms and purposes of its enlistment could not be sent into service in the war with the South, and the Indian war being now practically over, after two months we were ordered to Fort Snelling to be mustered out.

It will be noticed that this Indian war on our northwest border, occurring during the intense interest, anxiety, and activity of our great Civil War, was of considerable magnitude and importance and fairly successful, but [was] not noticed by the country at large, as it would otherwise have been, had not the almost entire attention of the people been absorbed in the changing scenes of the far greater and more important wants and interests of the war of the greater rebellion in the South.

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After we were mustered out, many of the young and unmarried men enlisted in other regiments and went south. But I went home to my family in Garden City and spent the winter with them. In the spring war parties of hostile Indians again began to enter our lines and commit depredations and murders. A party of fifteen attacked a small settlement at Willow Creek, twelve miles southwest of Garden City, just at night, and killed several families and stole a number of horses. I learned of this at ten o'clock the same night, and immediately saddled my horse (my old war horse of the previous service, that had once been knocked down by lightning and once wounded in one leg) and started for the nearest stockade, twenty miles west, to notify the garrison. On the way I passed through Madelia and gave them information and warning, and hastened on to the stockade six miles farther west and gave the information there. They immediately dispatched a courier to the stockade on the line twenty miles west of them. They furnished me with a fresh horse, with which I rode twelve miles north to the next stockade, where my sudden and rapid coming in the night stampeded some of their horses. They at once sent out twenty-five men southwest to try to find the trail of the Indians. After breakfast I returned to where I changed horses, intending to return home by way of Willow Creek, but upon reaching the stockade and finding they had sent out all their force to the northwest and had not notified the stockade ten miles southwest of them, I mounted my own horse again and rode to the next stockade south and gave them also the first information of this Indian raid. Then I decided to go on south to still another stockade and from there return home by way of Willow Creek and see for myself how many had been killed there. When I reached my last stockade, they had just received the news and were in their saddles ready for a start. I gave them all the information I had and told them where I had been and what directions had been taken by the parties from the other stockades.

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It was now ten o'clock in the morning and I had ridden full sixty-five miles and notified four stockades in twelve hours, and felt the need of a little rest. I remained there until after dinner and then started for Garden City, forty miles away, by the way of Willow Creek, where I found five persons had been killed by the Indians and ten horses stolen and taken off. I reached home at nine o'clock at night, having been gone about twenty-three hours, and had ridden over one hundred miles without sleep.

The result was that the party from the second stockade I notified struck the trail of those Indians about ten o'clock that morning and overtook them near a lake with high bluffs, where the Indians secreted themselves in the thick bush of the bluff, but the troops recovered all the stolen horses, the Indians escaping from them in the night. The next day another party of soldiers took up their trail and followed them until the entire band was killed or captured, and that ended any further raids into that part of the state during the spring and summer of 1864. After this last massacre, such was the animosity against the Indians that one of them could not pass through the state safely, even with the stars and stripes wound around him.[1]

Major Brackett, who had taken an active part in this Indian war, obtained authority from the government to raise a battalion of cavalry and mount them on Canadian ponies for frontier service. He asked me to raise one of the companies, but my wife raised such strenuous objections that I thought best to decline. I then sold my horse, that had done me such fine service in the Sibley campaign, to M. T. Fall of Garden City, who was commissioned as first lieutenant in Brackett's Battalion, and it was used for two years more in the same service of hunting and fighting Indians.

Soon after this the government called upon Minnesota to raise another regiment of infantry for the Civil War, and

[1] Compare with accounts of raids in Blue Earth County as reported to the *St. Paul Daily Press,* August 14–31, 1864.

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Governor Miller sent me a recruiting commission to raise one company for that regiment in the Blue Earth Valley, of which I could have the command, if successful, and I desired it. I soon had the company raised, a large number of whom had seen service already in the Indian war and some in the Civil War. My wife still believed I had done my part in the war and ought now to stay at home with my family. I told her that the war would be over in less than a year and that I would like to have a hand in it at the close.

When the company gathered at Mankato to choose their officers and start for Fort Snelling, I made the statement to them that, though I had recruited the company and was by right entitled to the command, yet as my wife objected on account of our three small children (one of them less than six days old and my wife still confined to her bed), I wished them to elect their company officers without any reference to me or my previous rights. Some short speeches were made, in which they stated that I had been their choice for captain from the outstart and would be unanimously elected, and that they would not be satisfied if I did not accept and go with them as their captain. They therefore elected me by a unanimous rising vote as captain, leaving the choice of the other company officers to be made after we reached Fort Snelling.

Wagons were provided as soon as possible, and we started for there, a distance of seventy miles, taking two days, and were mustered in as Company C of the Eleventh Regiment of Minnesota Infantry. After we were mustered in I called on the governor and stated to him the situation of things at home. He told me he would issue me my commission as captain and get me a furlough to go home to my family until the regiment was ready to leave for the South, and if my wife did not get well enough for me to leave home by that time, he would have my furlough extended for me. I at once returned home and found my wife had become reconciled to my leaving. During the week I was there I arranged our affairs so that my family would be comfortably provided for during a year

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at least, and got back to Fort Snelling just in time to go south with the regiment.

We marched to St. Paul, where we boarded a river steamer with two large barges lashed, one to each side, furnishing comfortable quarters for our one thousand men. When we left, our regimental band played "The Girl I Left Behind Me," until we were out of sight of the city.

We were taken to La Crosse, Wisconsin, the nearest point to a railroad, and the next day loaded into freight cars for Chicago, where we camped for two days in one of the city parks before we could get transportation for Louisville, Kentucky. At Indianapolis we were transferred to the airy upper decks of two other freight trains filled with fighting humanity below, detaining us one more day before we could get off for Jeffersonville opposite Louisville, where we camped for one night, and the next day crossed the river by ferry. Here we were detained three days until we could get proper transportation to go farther, as our officers were determined to have something better than the tops of old freight cars in riding through an enemy's country. We very quickly were made to feel the difference between being among friends or enemies in our own country. All the way from St. Paul to Jeffersonville we were welcomed with hearty cheers and demonstrations of kindness and loyalty. But as soon as we crossed the Ohio River into Kentucky, not only did all such demonstrations cease, but we were at once looked upon with frowns and scowls and dark, vicious, lowering countenances and ugly leers from both men and women, showing us as offensively as they dared that they had no use for Union soldiers except to insult and destroy them if they could.

After crossing the ferry, we were marched into the city into one of their finest streets, where the wealth and aristocracy of the city had their finest residences, and of course constituting the most rebel element of the population, and halted there while our officers were arranging for transportation to Nashville, Tennessee. During this halt it commenced to rain heavily.

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After we were thoroughly drenched, Lieutenant Colonel Ball, who had seen hard service in the First Minnesota Infantry, sent an order for us to take shelter from the rain by taking possession of the porches of the residences on both sides of the street. This gave the disloyal much offence, and in many instances our men were ordered off the porches by the people living in the houses; but our men obeyed no such orders and maintained their protected positions.

After remaining here five hours, the order came to fall in, [as] we supposed to go back and take a train for Nashville. Instead we were marched to a large tobacco warehouse, which was nearly empty. The owners had been asked permission for the regiment to occupy it for shelter until transportation was found, but refused. Lieutenant Colonel Ball ordered the regiment to follow him. The owners guarding the locked doors were instantly thrust aside and the doors broken open, and we marched in, and had good quarters and [were] well provided for during the remainder of our stay.

Up to this time our regiment was in command of Lieutenant Colonel Ball. Colonel James B. Gilfillan had not yet reached us. He was captain in one of the Minnesota regiments then in New Orleans, and had been notified of his promotion and ordered to meet us either at Louisville or Nashville. A telegram had been received from him that he was on the way by boat and would reach Louisville that evening at eight o'clock. As he was one of the early pioneer settlers of Minnesota, the officers of the regiment decided to give him a loyal western pioneer reception on his arrival and escort him to the United States Hotel, where Lieutenant Colonel Ball had secured the largest parlor for the occasion. As nearly all of the officers had served in the Indian war, it was decided to conduct the reception in Indian style. All of the officers of the regiment were to sit on the floor in a circle with their feet curled under them, and when the colonel was brought into this circle and introduced as our great war chief, all were to utter simultaneously the Indian "Huh!" in a sort of gutteral grunt as a

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formal sign of recognition and official welcome. When in this position another telegram came, stating that he would meet the regiment at Nashville, which changed our plans, and Lieutenant Colonel Ball made the war speech for the colonel to his braves to the effect that if his warriors would follow him, the great war would be closed before many moons. After his speech the lieutenant colonel was handed a large Sioux chief's pipe that one of our men had brought with him, made from the famous red pipestone from the quarries of Minnesota, to smoke the pipe of peace with all his under chiefs. At the close of these ceremonies refreshments were served, consisting of some of the best coffee and some of the hardest of hardtack, of which all partook. Then the officers started a Sioux war chant, which brought us all to our feet, and all took part in a war dance, which closed the Indian exercises of the evening. This was probably the only reception of this kind given to a military officer in and during the Civil War by his comrades.

The day after the reception the regiment was called into line and marched through the main streets of the city to a large open field, where we had our first regimental drill. Every company was reported full, and not a sick man in the regiment. So many of our men had been in the military service before that our officers found an easy and pleasant task in this first day's drill of a new regiment; and it made a fine appearance, as in 1864 it was a rare thing to see an infantry regiment with one thousand men in it after so much hard service and severe fighting had been done. Old soldiers in the city, who had served three years and who saw us marching, inquired what brigade that was going to the front newly uniformed. Many questions were asked and remarks made about this Minnesota brigade, for we were not taken for raw troops.

At noon the day following our regimental drill we had orders to go to Nashville by way of Louisville and Nashville Railroad, and our cars and accommodations were the best we had after leaving La Crosse. We reached Bowling Green just at dark and were detained there until next morning, as

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guerrillas had just burned a freight train on the track. That night our men were furnished ammunition, and next morning our two trains moved out cautiously, passing the wrecked train, where an immense amount of army stores had been destroyed or carried away. At several places we could see where trains had previously been destroyed. At the railroad tunnel thirty miles north of Nashville the guerrilla, General Morgan, had captured a passenger train, robbed the passengers, and then run the train into the tunnel and set it on fire, which destroyed the use of the tunnel for several months, during which time passengers and freight had to be transferred over the hills above and beyond the tunnel by six-horse mule teams, but the damage was repaired when we passed over the road.

On reaching Nashville just as it was gettting dark, we were marched about three miles, and went into camp near Fort Negley and the Chattanooga railroad; and for ten days large details were made from our regiment to guard freight trains to Chattanooga, the guards riding on top of the loaded cars, making a hard and very exposed and dangerous duty for us in a country infested with enemies and bands of guerrillas, worse to fight than even the wily and treacherous Indians. Every company in the regiment had the duty of making one or more of these important, but very risky journeys within those ten days. Then orders were given to fall in and march to the Louisville and Nashville depot, thinking we were to be sent to Sherman's army; but to our great disappointment we were detailed by companies to different points along the railroad to guard it from Nashville north to the Kentucky line, a distance of fifty miles, and build blockhouses five miles apart. Our headquarters were at Gallatin, twenty-five miles north of Nashville, a town of about four thousand population.

A negro regiment had preceded us in this city and had built stockades of poles and split logs set upright, affording rather poor shelter. At Richland station, five miles south of the Kentucky border, where my company was stationed, I at once built ten small log houses for ten men each, making comfortable

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quarters for my company. Patrols of six men each were sent twice a day to meet similar patrols from stations north and south of us, and each company made daily reports to headquarters.

The country near my station was well settled, and several large plantations were in sight, most of them abandoned by their owners, and the youngest and ablest of the men slaves had enlisted in the Union army, while their owners, all rebels, had gone into the southern army. The non-slaveholding population was mostly Union and loyal and had largely entered the Union ranks, and in this way they were nearly equally divided between the two armies, creating deadly animosity between neighbors and former friends. We were told that during the six weeks of their stay the colored regiment on guard before us had lost about one third of their number by guerrillas or rebel stay-at-homes picking them off, and the government found it almost sure death for them to use them for railroad guards and so sent them to the front, where they generally made good and useful soldiers.

In sight of our camp lived a family consisting of man, wife, three sons, and one daughter. They had a small plantation and ten slaves. The father was a pronounced Union man and offered himself to our army, but he was refused on account of his age. His three sons enlisted in the Confederate army and the girl [was] taken for service in a hospital. The mother claimed to be neutral. The two youngest boys were supposed to be killed, and the girl came home. The oldest boy was made captain of a band of guerrillas who operated in destroying railroads in rear of Sherman's army and destroying Union families and soldiers wherever they found them. They were known as Harper's guerrillas and had operated in conjunction with another band of outlaws known as McKay's guerrillas, both operating along the line of the road we were guarding. McKay with several others had been surrounded in a log house near Gallatin. They refused to surrender, and the house was set on fire and they all perished. The rest of the McKay gang

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joined Harper, giving him one hundred fifty men, and for two months before the battle of Nashville they committed some depredations nearly every day. But as Harper's old father and mother and sister lived near our camp, he was careful not to kill our patrols or any of our regiment, as we kept to the railroad and were not sent out to hunt guerrillas.

On Sunday two men from the station five miles south of me left their camp without leave, taking their guns with them, and went to a church two miles away from the railroad. Soon some of these guerrillas rode up to the church and demanded these men to come out and surrender, and after they had given up their guns, [they] were shot down in cold blood and then savagely mutilated worse than the Sioux Indians would have done; [the guerrillas] then told one of the officers of the church to go and tell the officers of these men to come and take care of their horribly mangled bodies. I talked with parties who were at the church at the time, who told me that it caused very little excitement, the preacher going right on with his services and closing them as usual.

Government engineers came to our camps and located a place for us to build strong blockhouses of hewn timbers twelve inches square, octagon forms, large enough to accommodate one hundred men. This work with our other duties kept us very busy until after the battle of Nashville. As soon as it was known that General Hood with his army was on his way to capture Nashville, the bands of guerrillas became more active than ever, with the purpose of destroying all railroad connections between Nashville and the North and by way of the Cumberland River; and for four weeks before the battle there was not a day passed but at some point between Bowling Green and Nashville the railroad or telegraph was cut to hinder supplies and reinforcements reaching General Thomas at Nashville.

At the time of the battle of Franklin, Harper's guerrillas cut the railroad ten miles north of our station, in Kentucky, at a steep upgrade, derailed the two engines drawing a train of

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thirty cars heavily loaded with government army stores, uncoupled the cars near the engines, and let the train go down the heavy grade, crashing into a similar train coming up, and then set fire to the wreckage of the two trains, consuming forty-five cars with their contents. On one of these trains were three soldiers in charge of some officers' horses. As soon as the news of the wreck reached Nashville, I was ordered to have fifty men ready to take a train to reach the scene of disaster in one hour. Before we left, we could see the light from the burning cars. We reached the spot about two o'clock a.m., and found, among other things the chivalrous southerners had done, the bodies of the three soldiers, who had first been shot and then their bodies cut up into small pieces to gratify this civilized chivalry. Full one thousand soldiers were soon there as witnesses to this deed of far worse than savage barbarians, and to aid in clearing the road of the wreckage, enabling trains to pass by evening. Within a week five of these guerrilla barbarians were caught and executed, rendering the others still more desperate, who proceeded to drive every Union family in that part of the country from their homes, or killing them. Many sought refuge in our camps and appealed for protection. An old man and his wife eighty years of age, a neighbor and friend of the Harper's, were ordered to leave their home and refused. Then the humane southern guerrillas—chivalry of Kentucky and Tennessee—took his only span of mules and his three cows and killed them in his dooryard in front of his house and told the old man that if he attempted to move the carcasses, they would kill him. Friends in Louisville heard of this and took care of them. A man by the name of Pardue, sixty-five years of age, was driven from his home, his wife and daughters going north, but he came to our camp and proved of great service to us as a guide and scout. He was fearless, and intimately acquainted with the country and people, and led our soldiers to the haunts of the guerrillas and to the destruction of many of them.

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Three days before Hood arrived with his army in front of Nashville, a large force of Union troops under command of General Green were making a forced march over the Louisville and Nashville pike, and camped one night six miles west of our station. Foraging parties were sent out in different directions. One of these, composed of sixteen men, was cut off from their main force by Harper's guerrillas and, after surrendering, were all shot in deliberate malice, excepting one, a teamster, who was sent back to headquarters to notify them what had become of his party. That night Harper visited his old father and mother to congratulate them on his complete destruction of the foraging party. Very soon after this incident the booming of cannon could be heard at Nashville and on the river below, where batteries had been planted to block the river against our boats, and we were hoping for orders to take our regiment to the front. Instead of this, two more regiments were sent up to help us guard the railroad, as it was the only railroad running north then open for supplies and reinforcements and of the greatest importance, and General Thomas had given the most peremptory orders to keep it open if it took twenty regiments to do it. The rebels made several attempts to cross the Cumberland River both above and below Nashville in large force to get possession of this road and cut us off from communication with the North, but were defeated every time. And during the battle of Nashville guerrilla bands made the most desperate efforts to destroy the road and telegraph lines, anticipating Hood's defeat of Thomas and thus cutting off Thomas' retreat north by the railroad. Scarcely an hour passed during this time that they did not break the road or telegraph somewhere.

The fate of the battle soon turned the tide, and instead of Thomas having to retreat, Hood lost his army, and whole regiments of Kentucky and Tennessee troops surrendered to our forces, sick of fighting, and were sent north as prisoners of war over the road we were guarding, ragged, frozen, and half starved; and orders were sent to all the guards along the rail-

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road to give these thousands of prisoners on the way to Camp Douglas and other prisons, all the hardtack and coffee we could spare; and for three days after the battle our principal work was to feed these poor ragged and starved foes from the piles of boxes of hardtack our men had piled up near the track, besides having pails of hot coffee ready to deal out to them. The conductor of one train of five hundred prisoners had orders to stop at our camp at Richland ten minutes to get refreshments, and during that time our company was transformed into waiters to serve them in their box cars as temporary prisons, with two Union soldiers at each door as guards. Never could a lot of men receive a happier service than was given during those ten minutes. When the train started on, three as hearty cheers as ever men could give went up from those five hundred refreshed soldiers for the kind men in blue who had generously fed them. And such was the treatment afforded these recent foes not only by our men all along the line of the railroad, but by the people all through Indiana and Illinois, wherever these trains of prisoners stopped. After the triumphant battle of Nashville and destruction of Hood's army, our regiment was assigned to the sixteenth corps under General A. J. Smith, and received the credit of being in the battle of Nashville, which was true as far as our desires were concerned, but not true of our position, unless guarding the railroad and fighting off guerrillas can be said to have been in some sense the battle of Nashville.

After that victory all the guerrilla bands except Harper's left off operating in our vicinity, but he continued to make it lively for us all until after Lee's surrender, often cutting the road and telegraph wires, doing more annoyance than real damage.

Everybody felt now that the war would soon be over, and our men were constantly talking about the probability of our soon receiving orders to return to our homes. In February, 1865, nearly all our regiment suffered severely from jaundice in its worst form, from which several died. All of us would

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gladly have been in the front of battle rather than endure the siege of that poisonous yellow enemy in our camp, the seeds of which probably never entirely left us. After that came the stunning and almost paralyzing news of Lincoln's assassination and the problem of its effect upon the war, as to whether it would stimulate the South to renewed effort, or result in crushing the rebellion unmercifully, if it attempted to go on.

For a while the guerrillas became more bold and active, but this soon changed to quietude when it was known that Johnston as well as Lee had surrendered. At the arrival of mail at our camp from headquarters, I received a letter from my wife at Garden City, on the back of which was written and signed by the postmaster at Garden City the following statement: "A. J. Jewett, his wife, four-year-old boy, his father, mother, and wife's sister, were all murdered and scalped by Indians this morning. If possible, return home at once." Under this was written, "If you wish to return home, come to headquarters on the first train and I will see that you have a furlough and transportation. (Signed) J. B. Gilfillan, Colonel." I took the first train to Gallatin, but concluded not to return home until I received further news from there as to this murder and its incidents at a time when no hostile Indians were known to be within three hundred miles from that place. This family and mine were intimate friends and consequently I felt a deep interest in the case. In a few days I learned the facts. An Indian half-breed by the name of Campbell had been a friend and interpreter to the whites all through the war of the Sioux and had gone with Brackett's Battalion, which was wintering near Fort Rice on the Missouri River. Lieutenant M. T. Fall of that battalion, from Garden City, to whom I had sold my Indian war horse, was a relative of Mr. Jewett, and Fall was in the habit of sending his surplus money to Jewett for safe-keeping. Campbell knew of this and left the battalion secretly and engaged six desperadoes from among the Sioux to go with him and get this money and divide it among them. They

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made the journey of four hundred miles on foot in winter, with three ponies to carry their supplies. They reached Jewett's farm two miles east of Garden City before the snow was all gone, attacked the family just at daylight, murdered them all, cut open the feather beds in search of the money, cooked themselves a breakfast, divided the money, and separated, the six Indians taking the ponies, while Campbell dressed himself in Jewett's best suit of clothes and started on foot for Mankato to go and visit his father's family at Henderson, twenty miles down the river from Mankato. A neighbor of Jewett, who was returning from Mankato, met Campbell and spoke with him, noticing that he was a half-breed and appeared to be in a great hurry. He drove on thinking there was something wrong about the man. When he got to Jewett's place, two other neighbors were there and told him of the murders. Another had gone to Garden City to report it. This man said, "I met one of the Indians who had a hand in this business." He turned his horse around and asked one of the men to go with him and they would overtake and capture him before he reached Mankato. When they reached a hill overlooking the town, the man they were after was in sight, hurrying to reach it. As they came nearer they both noticed that he had on a suit of Jewett's clothes. Drawing their revolvers, they halted him and ordered him to throw up his hands and surrender. They then disarmed him of two revolvers, made him get into the buggy with them, and in less than ten minutes they had him in prison in Mankato before any one in the city had heard of the murder. The courthouse bell was rung, also the church bells, as an alarm and assembly, and in a few minutes nearly every citizen had gathered around the courthouse and jail. Campbell soon realized that his life was short and asked for a Catholic priest, to whom he confessed the whole crime and turned over four hundred dollars of the money, and also told where the other six Indians could be found. After his confession he was told by the officers that they would give him one hour to prepare for death. And at two o'clock that after-

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noon, less than ten hours after the murder, the guilty wretch was hanged at the end of a rope thrown over the limb of a tree in the courthouse yard in the presence of the entire population of the city, closing in ignominy the career of one who had been of much service to us during nearly three years of the Indian war in Minnesota. The leader of this band of murderers having been promptly disposed of, the whole country was in excitement and armed and on the warpath to capture or kill the other six Indians before they could reach their homes in Dakota. The soldiers in all the stockades were notified and sent out into the large timber south of Mankato where Campbell had said their hiding-place was discovered. They fired on the small squad of soldiers that had found them, killing one and wounding another and then managed to escape, and were not heard of again for ten days. But the search and pursuit was kept up so persistently and extensively that they were all killed before reaching Dakota.[1]

On examination of the bodies of Jewett's family, it was found that his four-year-old boy, who had been struck on the head by an Indian war club and [was] supposed to be dead, was still alive, and the doctors succeeded in restoring him. Jewett's relatives came on from Boston and settled up the estate and took the boy home with them and educated him, and the last I knew of him [he] was a prominent lawyer in Boston, with a distinguishing mark no other one of them carried—a large bump on the top of his head made by an Indian war club.

The people were so wrought up by this murder that the county commissioners of Blue Earth County voted one thousand dollars with which to buy bloodhounds from the South to run down the small bands of outlaw Indians who continued to infest the country to steal and rob and murder the people. I received a letter from the county clerk inquiring if they could be gotten in Tennessee where we were, and I informed [him]

[1] Compare with the accounts given in the *St. Paul Daily Press,* May 5 and 6, 1865, and in Buck, *Indian Outbreaks,* 246–249.

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that there were two men in Sumner County, Tennessee, who made a business of raising bloodhounds for sale. He soon wrote me again, informing me that the commissioners had appointed a Garden City man by the name of E. P. Evans to go and see me and asked me to aid him in his business. In a few days Evans came with the money in his pocket, and we soon bought six fine, full-blooded hounds for him to take back with him. To do this was a great deal of an undertaking at that time, and to accomplish it successfully he had brought a letter from the governor to Gilfillan, the colonel of our regiment, asking him to detail two men from the regiment for the purpose of accompanying Evans with the dogs back to Mankato. Lee having surrendered and the war being considered over, the colonel told Evans that he felt sure the regiment would soon be sent to Fort Snelling to be mustered out, and it would be better for him to wait and go with the regiment and save him the expense of transportation; but if the regiment was not ordered home by the first of July, he would make the detail. The dogs went to Minnesota with the regiment. But on trial it was found that while they had been trained to follow the scent of a negro everywhere to his death, as soon as it came to the scent and trail of an Indian they would stick their tails between their legs and make a cowardly sneak in an opposite direction. So Blue Earth County lost its one thousand so far as the specific object of its expedition was concerned, and the board of commissioners lost all of their glory in the transaction, except the credit of introducing the first lot of bloodhounds in the state.

Going back now to our military service after the battle of Nashville; we were still kept guarding the railroad, but the guerrillas were very quiet. A Methodist camp meeting was being held about two miles from our camp, where two men of another company had previously been murdered by guerrillas one Sunday; and I received notice from headquarters that two companies of our regiment would be at our camp on the next Sunday morning to go with my company and surround

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the camp grounds and demand the surrender of some of Harper's gang of guerrillas who were to be there. We executed the orders, but failed to get the men, as by some underground method they had learned our purpose. The week before we had orders to return north, Harper sent word to Colonel Gilfillan that he would surrender his company of guerrillas, and arrangements were made to meet them and receive their surrender four miles east of Gallatin on a certain day. The surrender of seventy-five of them was accomplished, all laying down their arms except the officers, who were allowed to take their side arms and horses, and all took the same oath and parole of Lee's army and were permitted to return to their homes, except Harper and his lieutenants, who preferred to leave the state until they thought their homes would be a safe place for them from the vengeance of their Union neighbors. These officers were given a guard for their protection while they went with Harper to visit his home near my headquarters. This guard consisted of fifty men of my company and were to be at Harper's home the next day at ten o'clock, my first lieutenant and myself with them. Soon after we got there, Harper and his two lieutenants rode up on very fine horses, Harper a fine-looking man. They dismounted, but did not leave their horses until they were convinced we were there to protect them. During the four hours of our stay the family prepared dinner for us all, during which one of the officers took his dinner while the other two were outside on guard, suspicious and watching for trouble and ready to mount their horses at any moment and disappear, if any signs of danger were seen. While my men were having their dinner, Harper requested me and Lieutenant Neal to stay outside with him, as he wished to have some conversation with us. He told us he thought he and the other two would go to Mexico, as he knew they could not stay about home with any safety, as there were at least one hundred men in that county sworn to kill him at sight, and that if they knew of his surrender and this visit home, they probably would find it difficult to get away alive, and asked me

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if Pardue, a former neighbor of theirs, was still at my camp, as he was his worst enemy and the one he feared the most, and [he] felt he would not be safe that day if Pardue knew he was at home. And if they ever met he would have to kill Pardue at once or lose his own life. I assured him that Pardue had gone to Nashville on duty and did not know of his surrender and visit to his home. During our conversation he was free to tell us of several incidents of narrow escapes from contact or capture when our men were after him and his party. In one instance, [when] staying over night on plantations within two miles of each other, he was informed of our presence by a slave of the plantation where we were stopping, sent to inform him of our movements by one of the young ladies where we were staying, we reaching there five minutes after he and his men had left the place; and how in the night he took ten men and visited the place, saw we were still there and had our guards stationed, and that he and his men were so near the house that they could see us distinctly through the windows and could have fired and killed some of us, but did not because we had been so kind to his father, mother, and sister; that several times they had had opportunity to kill some of our men, but he had given strict orders to his men not to kill any of the Eleventh Minnesota unless attacked by them. As he and all of his men lived in that vicinity, it was good policy for them, on account of their families and home interests, not to kill any of our regiment and draw its vengeance upon their families and homes.

My lieutenant called Harper's attention to the fact that he and his lieutenants had government saddles on their horses, and asked him if he was willing to tell how they came by them. "Most certainly; we took them from the freight trains we destroyed ten miles north of Richland station," he said. I asked him if his men killed and mangled the three soldiers there in charge of some horses. He said they did. Lieutenant Neal then told him that both of us had been through the Minnesota Indian war and had seen the effects of Indian

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massacres and witnessed many horrible scenes of butchery, but in all the Indian wars and massacres had never looked upon persons so cruelly and horribly cut up and mangled as those three soldiers were. He replied that it was war, and such things were set apart for them to perform and were justifiable. Such inhuman malice as this to be justified by an intelligent being who participated in it, ought to have justified taking his life, even if he had surrendered to us. He narrated an instance when he and his men had arranged to capture my two lieutenants and myself at our boarding place about one hundred rods from our quarters near a heavy piece of woods just at dark, and said if we resisted we would have been killed, but we had just changed our boarding place. Lieutenant Neal assured him that we never could have been taken alive, as it was understood by us that it was sure death and of the cruelest kind to surrender to a band of guerrillas. Our conversation continued until dinner time, when we three sat down to an excellent farmer's meal, and after the father of the family invoked the divine blessing upon it, [we] partook heartily of this genuine home luxury, interspersed with many enjoyable stories from Captain Harper and Lieutenant Neal, both of whom were large, fine-looking men and excellent story-tellers, and the hour passed very pleasantly with many a roar of laughter.

The time had now come when Harper and his father and family must part, and it was a sad and tender moment, touching every one to tears, as they were an affectionate family. The father expressed the hope that his two sons in the Confederate army might live to soon return once more to a once happy home and they enjoy together a family reunion.

On leaving, Harper asked for a guard until he crossed the pike five miles west of Richland, which I had no authority to furnish; so, when we came to a bypath that led into the woods on the way to our camp, he thanked us for our kindness, bid us good-bye, and turned into the woods and was soon out of sight. We went on to camp relieved and congratulating our-

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selves that we were at last rid of that fearless guerrilla leader and his band and would probably see him no more. If he went to Mexico, he made a quick trip of it, as we learned that he was back home within two months at his former work of killing some of his enemies, and Pardue was one of those who lost his life during the next fall. And this enmity was so bitter between the Union men and guerrillas in that country that assassinations continued until both parties were nearly, if not totally, destroyed, no doubt Harper with the rest.

The latter part of June our regiment was relieved from duty and started for home, and all along the way, after leaving Kentucky, received the same welcome and hospitality shown those that had served longer and had been in scores of battles. On Sunday the train carrying us was sidetracked near a small town in Indiana and the engine detached, intending to leave us there until Monday. But the men were too enthusiastic for home to stay sidetracked in that way, and with cheers got out and pushed the train about a mile to town. An engine was attached and we reached Chicago that evening, stopping at Indianapolis long enough for a sumptuous dinner, during which our six bloodhounds attracted more attention than our nine hundred soldiers and officers. They were decorated with stars and stripes and labeled as follows: "Purchased by Blue Earth County, Minnesota. No more slaves to run down. Enlisted with the United States for the Sioux war. Deserted our rebel master and bound for Minnesota or bust."

The night we reached Chicago the entire regiment, except the officers, rolled themselves in their blankets and slept on the soft side of the pavement on Michigan Avenue, near the Exposition Building, with the cool breezes from Lake Michigan to gently fan us to quiet rest; and hundreds of people came to our spacious bedrooms without curtains to take a look at the "war-worn veterans," and especially the Tennessee dogs. Early next morning we were marching to take the train for La Crosse, Wisconsin, where steamboats were to receive us and carry us up the Mississippi River to Fort Snelling. At

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every place where we stopped along the road in Wisconsin, flags were flying from the housetops in our honor and ladies were at the train with flowers to pin on our coats, and baskets filled with fruit and food [were] distributed among us. And the nearer we got home the greater was the enthusiasm of welcome for the regiment and the six Tennessee recruits. At La Crosse, where we arrived just before dark, the mayor and citizens had prepared us good quarters for the night in the courthouse, city hall, and private homes. In the morning two large boats were at the wharf ready to take us on and give us a fine daylight ride up the "Father of Waters" and through historic Lake Pepin. It was the morning of the Fourth of July, and it looked as if nearly all the people in La Crosse wanted to take passage with us on those boats so great was the crowd at the dock. The regiment was divided between the boats; then the people to the full extent of the boats' capacity were permitted to go on, and it was stated that the "War Eagle," the floating palace of the Mississippi at that time, had fully two thousand people on board that day. There was a fine brass band on each boat, affording a very pleasant attraction. But many said that the dogs, the like of which they had never seen, three of them on each boat, were a far greater attraction than any brass band could be. Winona, Red Wing, Wabasha, and Lake City, where the boats stopped, were wild with enthusiasm over the return of the Eleventh Regiment. None of the men was allowed ashore, but baskets of flowers and refreshments were sent on board and distributed among them, for which they returned thanks to the kind people in many different ways, such as showing the dogs to the best possible advantage from the hurricane deck and throwing kisses to the young ladies.

Just before night we passed Hastings, where they gave us a gallant welcome by the firing of cannon and other patriotic demonstrations until we were out of sight. At eight o'clock we reached St. Paul, where the city had provided every comfort and welcome for our return home. Such recognition of

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our services on the part of the people everywhere, such hearty welcome back, such overflowing kindness, hospitality, and cheers as we received was in itself almost enough to repay us for the hardships and exposures we had endured, and can never be forgotten. The next day we marched to Fort Snelling with nine hundred men, one hundred less than we had left there with, and on the eleventh day of July were mustered out of the service and discharged.[1]

We had served less than a year and no man of the regiment had been killed in battle. But many lives had been sacrificed by exposure, hardships, and strenuous service against guerrilla bands in northern Tennessee, so that every station along the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, from the Kentucky line to Nashville, can bear witness by grass-covered mounds where our comrades are buried, that the Eleventh Minnesota, though late in the field, fully contributed a portion of the lives of its noble and patriotic young men to the union of states and salvation of the nation; while all or nearly all who returned were for life less able-bodied men than they would have been if they had not performed that service, the seeds of disease and disability having been sown in their systems by exposure and hardships unavoidably incidental to army life in active service.[2]

After being mustered out, my company was furnished conveyance by government wagons to Mankato and from there

[1] Captain Potter's narrative of the arrival of the regiment at St. Paul differs in some particulars from the account in the *St. Paul Daily Press,* July 6, 1865.

Shortly before his death Captain Potter turned over to the Eleventh Regiment Minnesota Volunteer Infantry Association, with the express wish that it should be ultimately deposited with the Minnesota Historical Society, an album containing photographs of all the members of Company C of that regiment, taken at the time of their muster-out at Fort Snelling. The men of the company held Captain Potter in high esteem and affection; and the album was given him as a souvenir of their months of association together. Through the secretary-treasurer, Mr. Benjamin Brack of St. Paul, the album was forwarded to the society in June, 1916.

[2] For a history of the Eleventh Regiment Minnesota Infantry Volunteers, see "Narrative of the Eleventh Regiment" by Rufus Daven-

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they went to their homes in Blue Earth Valley, where nearly all of them enlisted, as they were mostly farmers and farmers' sons. After we separated at Mankato, I returned to my home in Garden City to enjoy the blessings of peace once more in the undisturbed society of family and friends. Not long after reaching home, I purchased the beautiful farm of Colonel J. H. Baker on the Watonwan River, one mile from town, where I lived for the next ten years, during which Minnesota had become a great and prosperous state. Railroads had been built to reach nearly every county in the south part of the state, and the two former Indian reservations had been transformed into populated and prosperous farms, and the three years of Indian warfare, in which one thousand five hundred settlers' lives were sacrificed, seemed to have been almost forgotten, except by the oldest residents who shared in it and had a hand in driving the savages out of the state. The war, notwithstanding its cruelties and sufferings, apparently proved a final benefit in ridding the very best agricultural part of the state of its dangerous encumbrance much sooner and quicker than otherwise could have been done.

In 1873–75 the grasshoppers from the plains west of us came into the state in such vast numbers as to nearly destroy all the crops during those three years, to such an extent that most of the farmers who remained on their farms were obliged to accept aid from the state or friends outside the state. Every possible plan was tried to drive the locusts off or kill them off, but we found that though we could drive off and kill the Indians, the locusts were too much for our skill and power. Our county commissioners voted a bounty of ten cents a quart for them, and the schools were closed to have the children as well as adults catch and destroy them with canvas nets. The principal of the Garden City school, Judson Jones, and his

port of Company G, in *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars,* 1: 488–491; *St. Paul Daily Press,* July 6, 1865. See also letters from various members of the regiment appearing in the *Press,* October 14, 30, November 3, 1864, January 26, June 28, 1865.

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pupils spent one day on my farm with their nets, and my nearest neighbor had a canvas net attached to his hayrake and was catching them by horse power. And other improved methods of getting them so increased the catch that the price was put down to five cents a quart, and after the third day's harvest the crop was so great that the bounty was taken entirely off for fear of bankrupting the county. One large farmer attached a funnel-shaped net to his two hayrakes twenty feet apart, drawn by two horses, and his one day's catch filled as many grain sacks as could be loaded on a hayrack, and required four horses to draw them. They had to be killed in the sacks with kerosene oil and then the supervisor of each township had to attend to measuring them and burying them in long, deep trenches. But it availed little. On this account thousands of farmers left the state and took their stock with them and went into other western states.[1]

I will relate briefly another very exciting event in which I personally took part, which very much stirred up almost the entire state, the narration of which will close up my twenty years' life history in Minnesota.

About the first of August, 1876, eight men, mounted on fine horses, rode into Mankato and said they were looking for good opportunities to buy up Minnesota grasshopper-devastated farms. I met the same men pretending to be looking for cheap farm lands. Very soon after our conversation a procession headed by a brass band playing national airs came down the main street attracting the attention of the people. Immediately these land-buyers mounted their horses and rode to St. Peter; put up at the best hotel; called on the principal business men; went to the banks to get some bills changed; returned to the hotel and sat on the porch, amusing themselves during the

[1] The sufferings and hardships occasioned by the grasshopper plagues are recounted in local newspapers throughout southern Minnesota for this period. See also *The Grasshopper, or Rocky Mountain Locust, and Its Ravages in Minnesota; a Special Report to the Hon. C. K. Davis, Governor of Minnesota* (St. Paul, 1876); Minnesota, *Executive Documents,* 1875, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 33; no. 13, p. 57.

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afternoon throwing small coins into the street to see the boys scramble for them. During the evening they had many offers of cheap farms, which they promised to go and see. But next morning they left St. Peter and rode east through Le Sueur County, and on the second day took dinner at a restaurant in Northfield, Rice County. After dinner six of the men mounted their horses and at the same time the other two went to the only bank in the town and with revolvers aimed at him ordered the cashier to hand over to them all the money there was in the bank. The cashier at once closed the doors of the money vault, but was instantly shot dead and also the janitor of the bank and a customer then in the bank wounded. While this was occurring in the bank, the six men on their horses rode about firing their revolvers and ordering all persons to keep indoors or get shot. But the citizens had quickly become aroused to the emergency and from windows and doors began to pour on the mounted robbers a deadly fire, from which two of them fell dead from their horses and two more were wounded. The two in the bank hastily taking what little money was in sight, mounted hurriedly and fled to the woods a few miles from the village, where they remained in hiding for several days until they thought the excitement and search for them was over. Then leaving their horses, they started on foot to elude pursuit and try to get safely out of Minnesota.

On searching the two dead robbers, maps and other positive evidence was found proving that they were the gang of the James and Younger brothers, outlaws and robbers from Missouri, refuse and remnants from the war of the southern rebellion, who had turned to be depredators and marauders upon peaceful society. Four miles east of Mankato, in their attempts to get safely out of the state on foot, they entered a farm house by night and ordered the family to prepare them a good supper—the first good meal they had been able to get in eight days—paid for it and at once left for the woods again.

In the meantime the country all around had found out that the robbers and murderers were still in hiding in the state.

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Special trains on all the railroads were made up and word sent out that all who wanted to volunteer to capture or kill this band of robbers should have a free pass on these trains. Immediately the whole southwestern part of the state was under arms hastening to the conflict. Old Indian fighters and Civil War veterans, with the arms they used before and were familiar with, rendezvoused at every available point, and before night guards and patrols were stationed at all bridges over the Blue Earth River, now swollen by recent rains, but which the robbers would have to cross to go west and get out of the state towards Missouri.

At the wagon bridge one mile west of Mankato, about ten o'clock that night, when very dark, some one threw stones into the east end of the covered bridge to ascertain if any one was inside, but did not attempt to cross. About thirty rods south of this was a long, high railroad bridge with nothing but cross ties and rails on and guarded by railroad section men. At these the robbers fired, and they fled away for safety. The robbers then crawled over that bridge on their hands and knees, stole two horses on which to mount their two wounded comrades, and then took the road to Lake Crystal. On reaching the Garden City road, they were fired at by guards stationed there, causing them to separate. The two James brothers stole two good farm horses belonging to Rev. Mr. Rockwood, a minister living in Garden City, and at daybreak next morning were seen riding bareback on two gray horses one mile north of Madelia. That morning Captain Ara Barton, sheriff of Rice County, who had served through the Indian war in the cavalry regiment with me, came to Garden City, to obtain information about the horses stolen from the minister and asked me to go with him after the robbers. I told him I had been in Michigan with my family for the last eight months, that my health was not good, and that I thought I could not endure such a task. But he urged me so hard I finally yielded, and loaded my carbine and revolver I had used through the Indian war and rode with him to Lake Crystal, where we took

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the first train for St. James, thirty miles west. There we hired a team to take us north to head off the robbers if possible, but before we got started a man came in on horseback and informed us that the robbers had passed five miles north of us only an hour before. We then got the section men with two hand cars to take eight of us to Windom, thirty miles farther west, arriving there at two o'clock p.m. We got dinner and secured a good team to take eight of us twenty miles northwest to a ford on the Des Moines River, reaching there about dark. We stationed guards at the ford. The next morning we learned that the James boys had stayed all night with a settler ten miles north and east of us, which encouraged us, as we were now ahead of them. Then we took another ride of forty miles into Pipestone County, which was near the west state line, but could get no further track of the fugitives. So next day we rode south to the railroad, where we took the first train east towards home. On reaching Madelia, we learned that the hiding-place of four of the robbers had been discovered five miles north of Madelia, and two hundred armed men were after them, and before night one of the four robbers was killed and the three Younger brothers, all wounded, had been compelled to surrender and were in the hands of Sheriff Barton. As soon as this was known, a large delegation came from St. Paul on a special train to take the prisoners to St. Paul, but Sheriff Barton told them that, as they had committed the robbery and murder in Rice County under his jurisdiction, he should take them there for trial and punishment. But the St. Paul delegation thought if the prisoners were taken by the way of Owatonna, they would have to change cars twice, and the excited and angry people would capture and hang them before we reached the Rice County jail. As the sheriff had legal possession of the prisoners and a strong guard to protect them, he refused to take them to St. Paul, and it was finally arranged by having them take the body of the dead robber to St. Paul, while he took the live ones on to Rice County jail. It was said that the arrival of the dead robber in St. Paul was wit-

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nessed by the largest crowd of people ever in the city up to that time.

The three robbers, whose wounds had not been dressed, were taken into a passenger car, and a doctor who examined them thought two of them would die before reaching their destination. Cole Younger, the oldest, was able to sit up and was willing to tell all they had passed through since coming into the state. As I was one of the guard and sat in the seat next him, he asked me many questions. One of the leading Mankato bankers was on the train, and Younger said he would like to speak with him. I went to Mr. S——— and told him the prisoner wanted to speak with him. Younger said, "I was in your bank fifteen days ago, got a twenty-dollar bill changed, talked with you about some farms you had for sale." "Yes," said Mr. S———, "and you agreed to return or let me hear from you." Younger replied, "I did not lie to you. I have done both. I have returned and you now hear from me." Mr. S——— lectured him for the business he was in. Younger asked if he would like to know the difference between the business he was following and that of the banker. Mr. S——— said he would, and Younger said: "In your business you are robbing the poor and in mine I am robbing the rich. Our plans were laid to rob the banks in your city and then make our escape through the unsettled country we came in on, but when that band came along the street and all the people came out, we lost our chance and our nerve and rode on into the thickest settled part of the state and went to our death, as I hear that the two James brothers have been killed and we three brothers are all that are left of the eight who visited your city fifteen days ago."

Another man from Mankato said to Younger, "Less than fourteen years ago we hung thirty-eight men in our city on one scaffold, and at the same time, every one of them as good [as], if not better than, you are." His reply was, "I expect to hang before I leave your city, but these are my two brothers, both mortally wounded, and one of them under twenty years of

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age, on his first raid of this kind, and I blame myself for it, and all I ask of you people is not to hang those boys. Let them die as they are."

The train had now reached the city, where several thousand people were waiting to see the robbers and where we had to change to another railroad a quarter of a mile away. When the crowd of people saw the badly wounded robbers, they were moved with pity instead of malice towards them. At Owatonna we had to make another transfer. The entire city and country around were out in full force to get a look at the captured outlaws. The same feeling of pity prevailed here towards their wounded and suffering condition as at Mankato. Here we were informed by telegraph that at Faribault thousands of angry people had gathered and a strong mob element existed ready to hang the robbers. Sheriff Barton telegraphed back that he would be there on the regular train at three o'clock p.m. and that he had a strong guard and that, if any one tried to mob these mortally wounded prisoners, it would mean death to them. But instead of taking the regular train, we took a freight train that started earlier and stopped a mile south of Faribault depot, where two teams were ready to take the prisoners and guards direct to the jail, which was done so unexpectedly and secretly that the prisoners were inside the prison and under the doctor's care while the excited mass of people were at the depot waiting for the coming of the regular passenger train. When they found that the prisoners were in the jail, many spoke in favor of mobbing them, but learning of the badly wounded condition they were in, decided to let the law take its course with them.

By request of the sheriff I stayed five days with them, and during that time a strong guard was kept at the jail. Then I returned home in Garden City, leaving my army carbine to be used by the guard, and it was the gun that killed a man who approached the jail one night and would not halt at the sentry's order. Twenty years after that I wrote Captain Barton to send me that carbine by express, as I desired to have it go to

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my posterity as a valued relic and memento of the days of the Indian wars in Minnesota. But he informed me that it had been destroyed by fire.

As soon as the three Younger brothers recovered from their wounds, they were brought to trial, plead guilty, and sentenced to state prison for life. The state law was such that if a murderer plead guilty, he could not be hung.[1]

The five days I spent in the siege and battle of New Ulm in the Sioux war were more dangerous, but the five days I spent in the attempt to capture the two James brothers and the capture and taking to jail of the three Younger brothers, were fully as exciting, and demonstrated to me that the good and loyal people of Minnesota would never allow themselves to be robbed and murdered by any unexpected invasion of a band of desperate guerrillas of the southern chivalry without instantly rallying and making a brave and victorious fight for their lives and property.

As I had now lived west of the Mississippi nearly twenty-five years and had my share of western pioneer life, I concluded to go back to my native state until the grasshopper scourge had passed away, and then return when I could obtain a living by hard labor and not have it consumed by hoards of insects. With this in view I rented my farm to a man who had no means with which to leave the country and depended upon the state to furnish him seed for the next season's planting. I sold my live stock to parties living outside the visited and scourged district, and in the fall of 1876 started for Michigan, where my family had been for the past year.

[1] Detailed accounts of the Northfield robbery and of the pursuit of the desperadoes appeared in the *St. Paul and Minneapolis Pioneer-Press and Tribune*, September 8–October 7, 1876; *Faribault Republican*, September 13–27, 1876. See also Thomas Coleman Younger, *The Story of Cole Younger*, 79–93 (Chicago, 1903); John Jay Lemon, *The Northfield Tragedy; a History of the Northfield Bank Raid and Murders* (St. Paul, 1876); George Huntington, *Robber and Hero; the Story of the Raid of the First National Bank of Northfield, Minnesota, by the James-Younger Band of Robbers in 1876* (Northfield, 1895).

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The following winter I traveled as a book agent, but my health suffering some, I abandoned that kind of employment. The next season I traded my Minnesota farm for a Michigan farm, on which I lived until my family of five children were all of age. During this time I was also engaged with two of my brothers in the hardwood lumber business at Potterville. I then sold my farm and bought another in the same county, lying on a new line of railroad being built. I laid out the present village of Mulliken and continued a few years longer in the lumber business, then took a quarter interest in the Potter Furniture Manufacturing Company at Lansing, making that city my home during the past sixteen years.

My life has not been filled with important and thrilling events as some others of frontier life for a shorter period. Though I have not suffered great hardships, still there have been many exposures, trials, and dangers. Yet, as I now look back upon those earlier experiences of pioneer and army life, they seem more like pleasures than hardships and perils.

And now at seventy-five years of age, man's usual life limit at the maximum, as I see myself still enjoying the companionship of the wife of my youth and that of all my children and thirteen grandchildren, not a death having yet occurred among us, enjoying the unbroken love as well as companionship of all these, I ask what more can I have to comfort me in this life except to know that after this mortal body is cared for there will be an immortal body and still happier home.

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ERRATA

Page 18, lines 30 and 35, for *Johnston,* read *Johnson.*
—— 98, line 31, for *Jenkins,* read *Jenkin.*
—— 107, line 26, for *Joseph,* read *Jasper.*
—— 143, line 13, for *Frizell,* read *Frizzell.*
—— 157, line 26, for *1849–50,* read *1850–51;* the former date is given in the letters cited.
—— 184, line 3, for *Noble's,* read *Nobles'.*
—— 219, line 1 of note 1, for *James W. Taylor,* read *James Taylor.*
—— 342, line 16, for *Edward,* read *Edmond.*
—— 383, line 2, for *Schockley,* read *Shockley.*
—— 419, line 15 of the note, for *1912,* read *1910.*
—— 487, line 3 of the note, for *Colonel Miller,* read *Major Cook.*
—— 512, line 8 of the note, for *at the time of their muster-out at Fort Snelling,* read *in 1864 before the battle of Nashville.* The same correction should be made in line 13, page 399.

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